



## **Driving improved practice in response to child sexual abuse**

Ian Dean, Director, Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

## Looking after yourself

Sexual abuse can be difficult to think about and talk about. Thinking about it and talking about it will affect us all in **different ways**, at **different times**.

It is important that we...

- Be aware of the feelings and experiences of other delegates
- Be kind to ourselves (personally and professionally)
- Respect each other's learning journey

# The CSA Centre

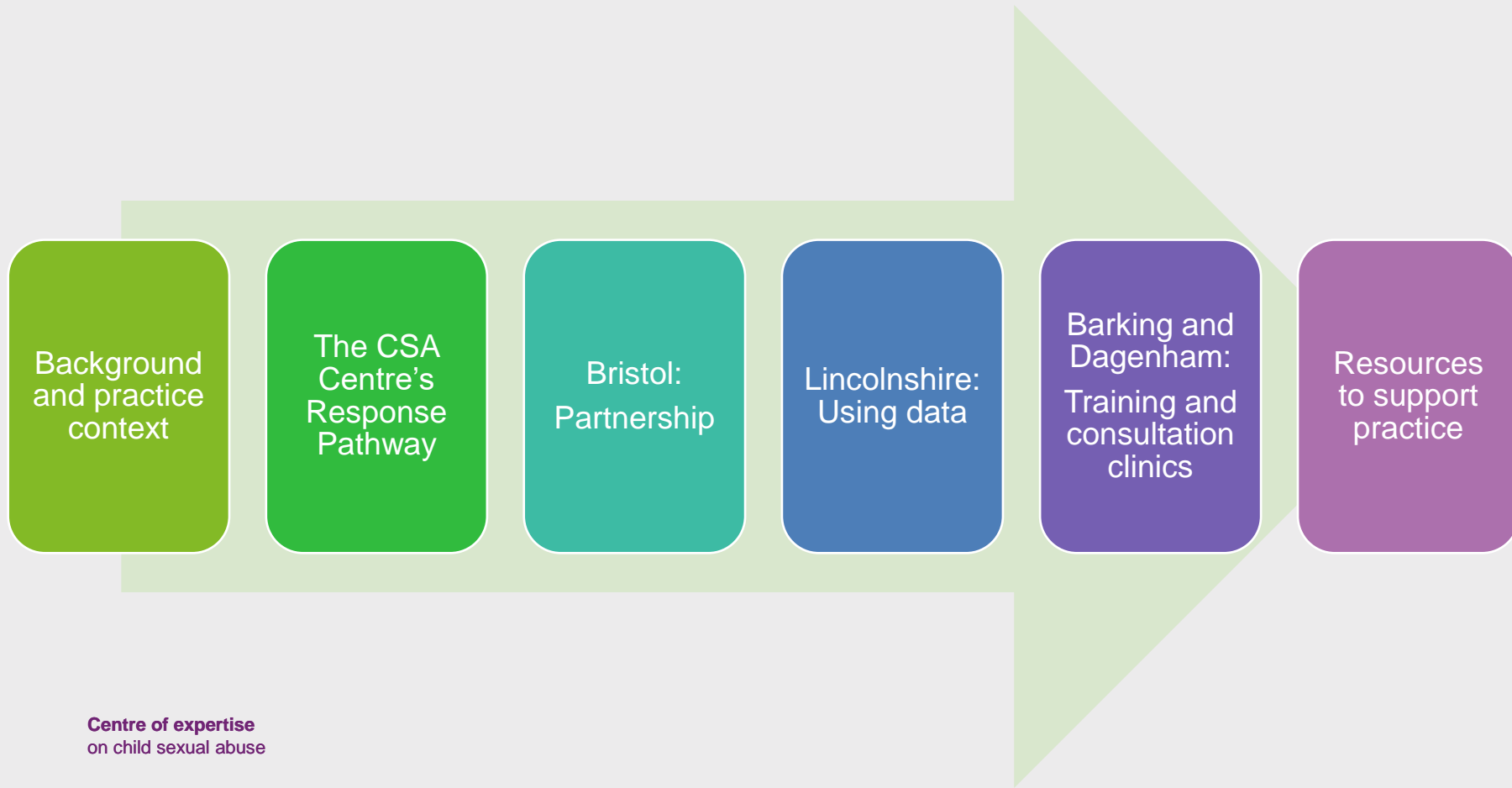
We are the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre). We want children to be able to live **free from the threat and harm of sexual abuse**.

Our aim is to reduce the impact of child sexual abuse through improved prevention and better response.

We are a **multi-disciplinary team** that works closely with key partners from academic institutions, local authorities, health, education, police and the voluntary sector.



# What we'll be talking about



# Background and practice context

# Far more children are sexually abused than services identify

Child sexual abuse in 2021/22: Trends in official data  
[csacentre.org.uk](https://www.csacentre.org.uk)

An iceberg graphic where the tip is above the water line and the much larger base is submerged. The water line is represented by a horizontal dashed line. The numbers and text are placed at different levels relative to this line to illustrate the scale of the problem.

2,700 children on a child protection plan due to child sexual abuse (England and Wales)

50,000 children assessed at risk of sexual abuse\* (England)

103,000 child sexual abuse offences recorded by the police (England and Wales)

500,000

children are estimated to be sexually abused every year\*\*

Sources: Home Office, Police recorded crime and outcomes, 2021/22; Department for Education, Characteristics of Children in Need, 2021/22. \* Includes assessments recording concerns of child sexual abuse and exploitation \*\* Estimate calculated using single-year prevalence estimates by age group (Radford et al, 2011, Childhood abuse and neglect in the UK today) and the Office for National Statistics 2021 Census results. Please note: numbers rounded to the nearest hundred.

# Messages from inspections, reviews and inquiries

Professionals have **not been given** the knowledge and skills to confidently identify and respond to child sexual abuse

Professionals find this area of practice very difficult. Local area leaders across all agencies must provide **better training and support** for frontline professionals.

Professionals rely too heavily on children to **verbally disclose** abuse.

An **overreliance on the criminal justice system** as a means of assessing whether abuse has occurred

## Messages from case reviews

Children do tell.  
Professionals do not always  
hear

Too often professionals take  
retractions from children,  
and denial by adults, as an  
indication that abuse didn't  
happen.

Significant barriers to  
children talking about  
sexual abuse. These need  
acknowledging and  
addressing.

Children need support to  
talk about child sexual  
abuse. Professionals are  
nervous about talking to  
children and getting it  
wrong.

Importance of recording and  
making sure children's  
circumstances are  
understood over time.

Lack of a clearly articulated  
pathway to guide responses  
to child sexual abuse



# The CSA Centre's Response Pathway

An interactive resource empowering professionals to protect children from sexual abuse.

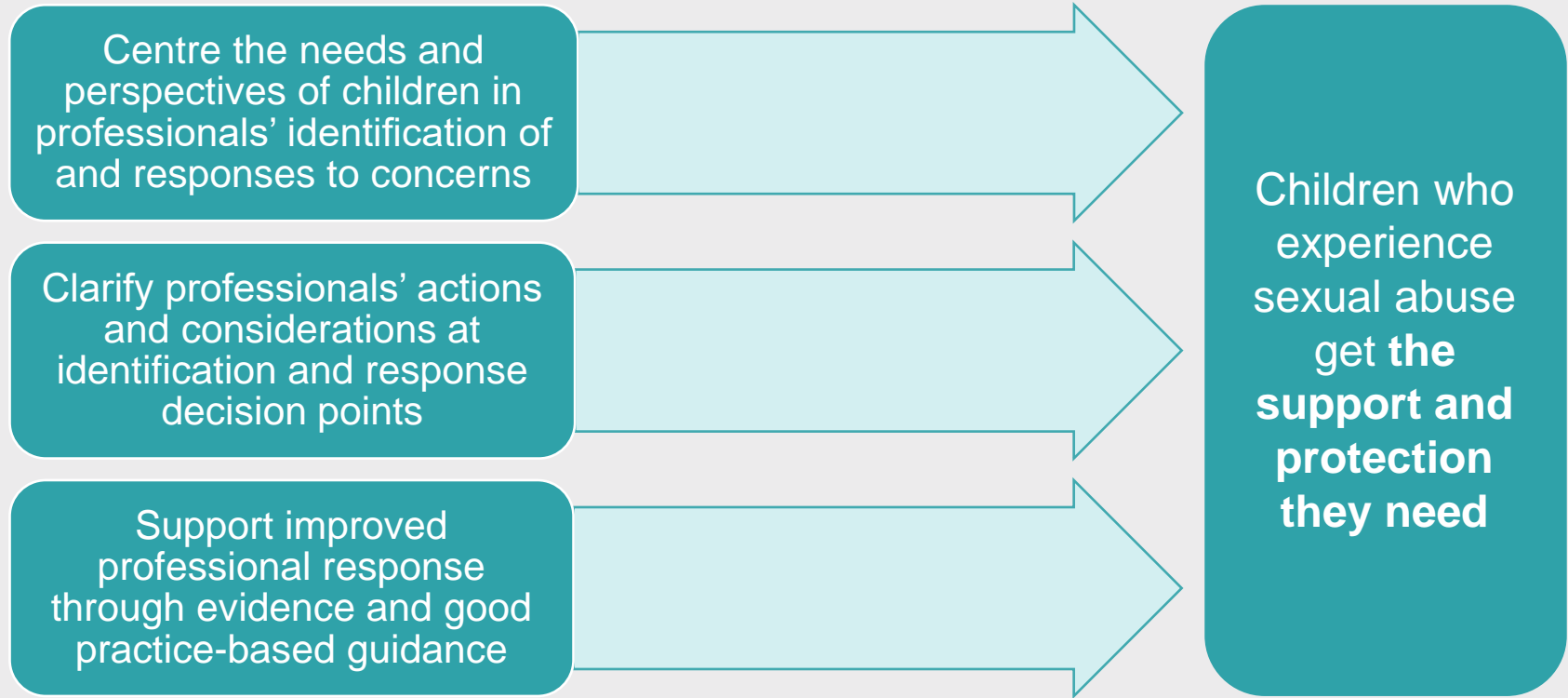
# What is the Response Pathway?

An **interactive online resource** guiding professionals on the **steps they can take** to protect and support children and their families, when there are concerns of sexual abuse. The resource sets out **how to respond at key points**: building on evidence, current legislation, statutory guidance, and policies, to **focus on the needs of the child**, how they are feeling and what they hope will happen. The CSA Centre's Response Pathway is designed to **empower professionals** to understand the role they can play; not just by telling them what to do, but by helping them understand how to do it.

Professionals can visit <http://www.csacentre.org.uk/response-pathway> to access the online resource and supporting to further information and resources to support professional practice.



**Overall aim:** Children who experience sexual abuse get the support and protection they need



# A focus on all forms of child sexual abuse

Intra-familial child  
sexual abuse

Sibling sexual abuse

Harmful sexual  
behaviours by children  
and young people

Child sexual  
exploitation

Online child sexual  
abuse

Institutional sexual  
abuse

# The audience

The **Response Pathway** was designed for any professional whose role brings them into contact with children, young people and their families.

**To supplement, not replace, existing statutory guidance.**

Carefully grounded in the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.



# Developing the Response Pathway



## Partnership with three pilot sites



# Pilot site: Bristol

Creating a successful partnership

Becky Lewis

Strategic Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service Manager

Bristol City Council

Centre of expertise  
on child sexual abuse





# Partnering with voluntary and community sector

- Launched the CSA pathway in a context of specialist child sexual abuse services which have developed organically rather than by system design
- Need for greater cohesion, reducing multiple referrals, supporting shared expectations
- Voluntary and statutory groups shared Theory of Change and System Development workshops – slowly as pathway developed identifying opportunities to build cohesion and change
- Voice, influence and participation central to implementation



**Shared  
system  
leadership**

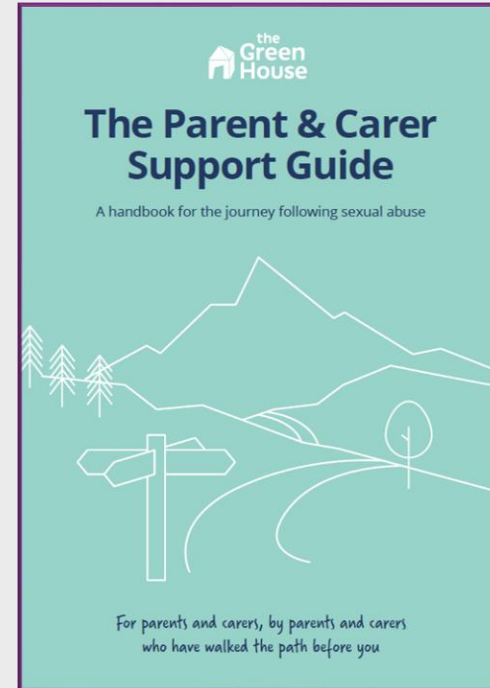
**Developing working practices**

**Learning exchange**

**Systems integration**

# Implementation

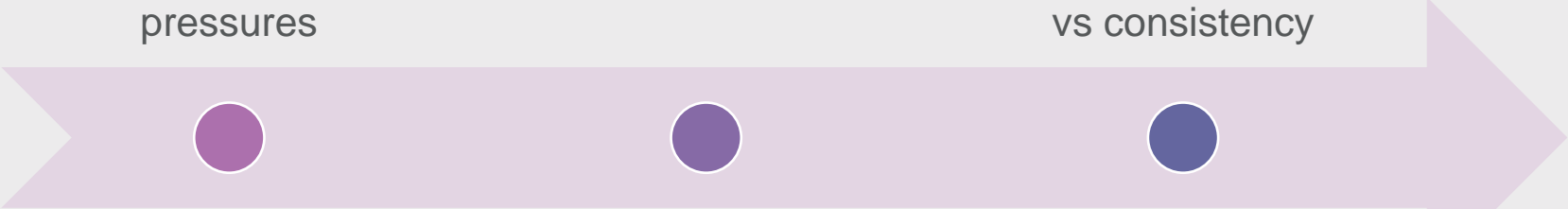
- Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Trustee Scheme – Response Pathway Lived Experience Trustee
- The Green House Parent & Carer Support Guide
- Launch events providing platform for lived experience to bring the pathway to life



# Challenges

Implementing change  
in context of workforce  
instability and demand  
pressures

Navigating procedure,  
guidance and practice  
manuals – localising  
vs consistency



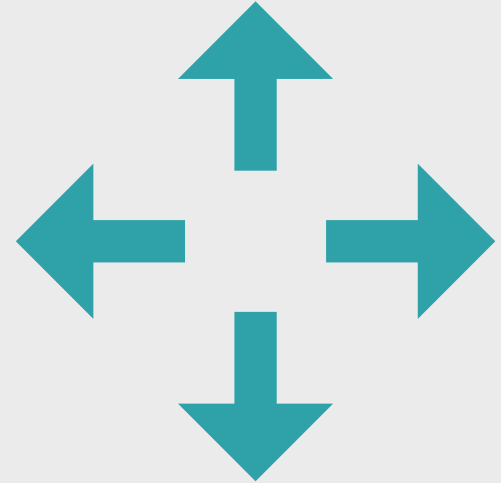
Timelines for  
commissioning cycles  
limiting more structural  
change

# Impact

Better articulated decision making and rationale about the need for “evidence” at the Front Door **improving outcomes** and contributing to increasing rates of **contacts progressing to referral.**

Begun to rationalize assessment processes across statutory and specialist services to **reduce children having to repeat their stories.**

Performance data set has allowed us to begin to **identify issues in the system and address them.**



# Pilot site: Lincolnshire

Using data to better identify and respond to children

Debbie Johnson

Quality and Standards Manager

Lincolnshire County Council

Centre of expertise  
on child sexual abuse



News Local News Crime

## Police reveal SEVEN have been arrested in Lincolnshire church child abuse probe so far

The senior detective leading Operation Redstone believes there are more victims who have not yet come forward

By Paul Whitlam Senior reporter  
05:05, 23 APR 2018 UPDATED 11:40, 26 APR 2018

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England Local News Regions Lincolnshire

## Stubton Hall School: Deputy head David Taylor jailed for rape

© 23 August 2021

As a partnership we have learned a lot from our involvement in non recent abuse inquiries one of which provided **significant evidence** to the Independent Inquiry into child sexual abuse (IICSA).

We gave a commitment to ensure we **trained, resourced and supported** our practitioners across the LSCP to tackle child sexual abuse with courage and confidence.

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## Two former Bishops of Lincoln failed to act on abuse allegations

© 29 April 2019

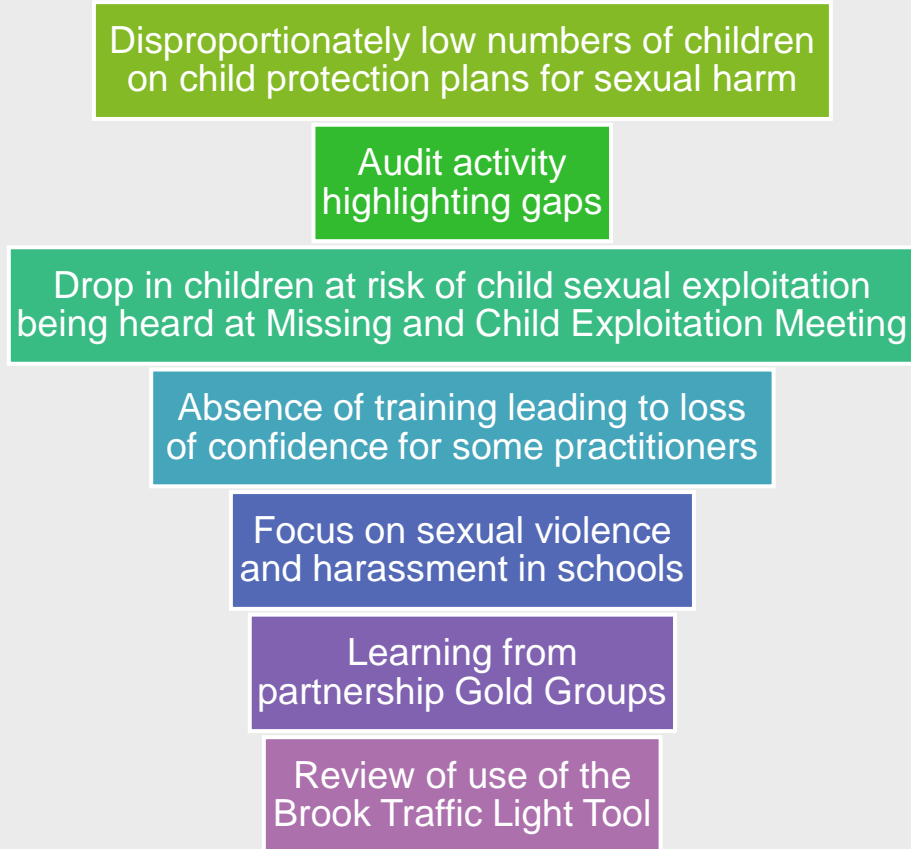
### Bishop apologises for mistakes after Lincoln abuse featured on Panorama

by HATTIE WILLIAMS  
30 APRIL 2019



THE diocese of Lincoln has apologised for its failure to handle past allegations of "appalling" abuse,

# Drivers for change





# Partnership Approach



# Shared vision

## Aim 1:

Improve the response to families of children who are sexually abused.

## Aim 2:

Improve the way professionals **identify** child sexual abuse.

## Aim 3:

Improve the way children who have experienced sexual abuse are **supported and protected** by professionals.

## Aim 4:

Build on and improve existing **multi-agency working**.

## Aim 5:

Embed the **voices of victims and survivors** in informing service response.

# Child sexual abuse data

Work that we have been doing...

Centre of expertise  
on child sexual abuse



# Child Sexual Abuse Report

7198	1827
No. of Instances	Instances of Offenders Under 18
4482	2092
No. of Victims	Instances of Offenders Over 18



## Occurrence Date Filters:

**Dates**

1/1/1943

10/29/2023

**Financial Year**

All

## Reported Date Filters:

**Dates**

1/1/2019

10/30/2023

**Financial Year**

All

## Reports:

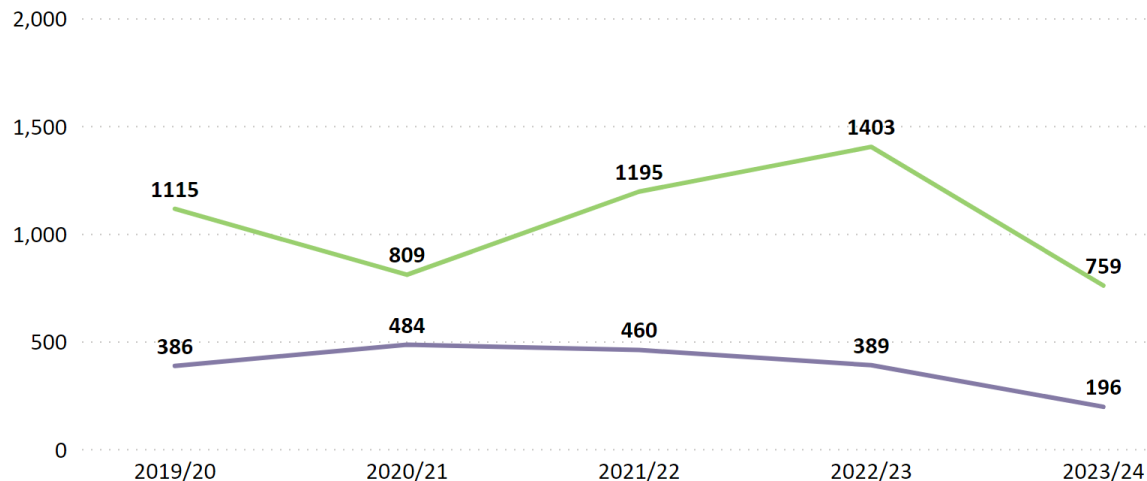
### Page Navigation Selection

5. LCC Data

Go

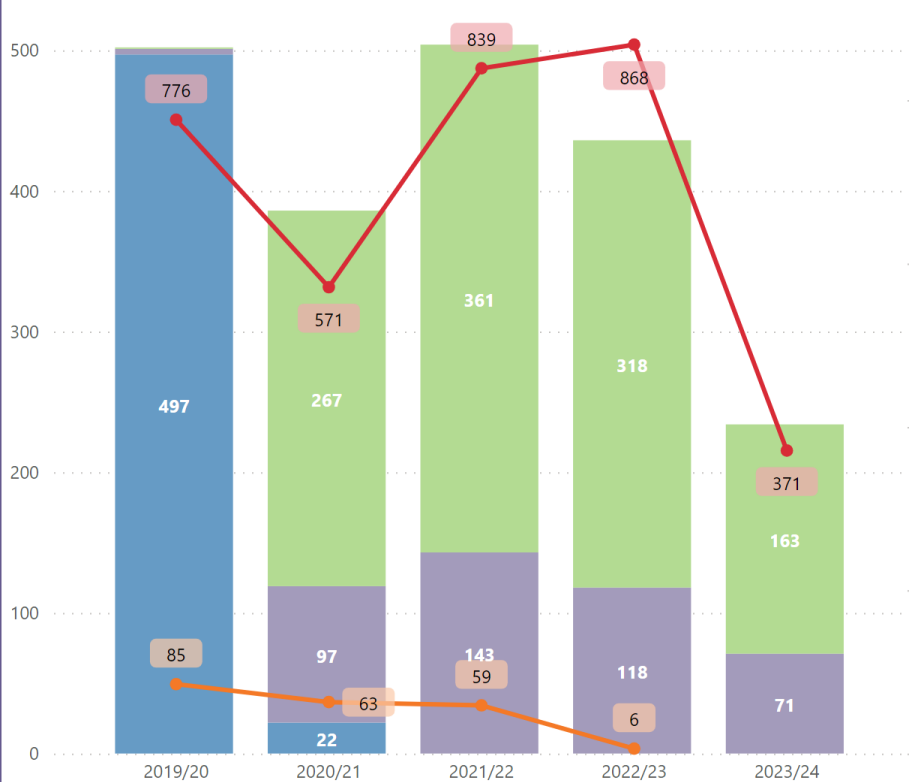
Child Sexual Abuse Incidents Reported

● Non Recent ● Recent



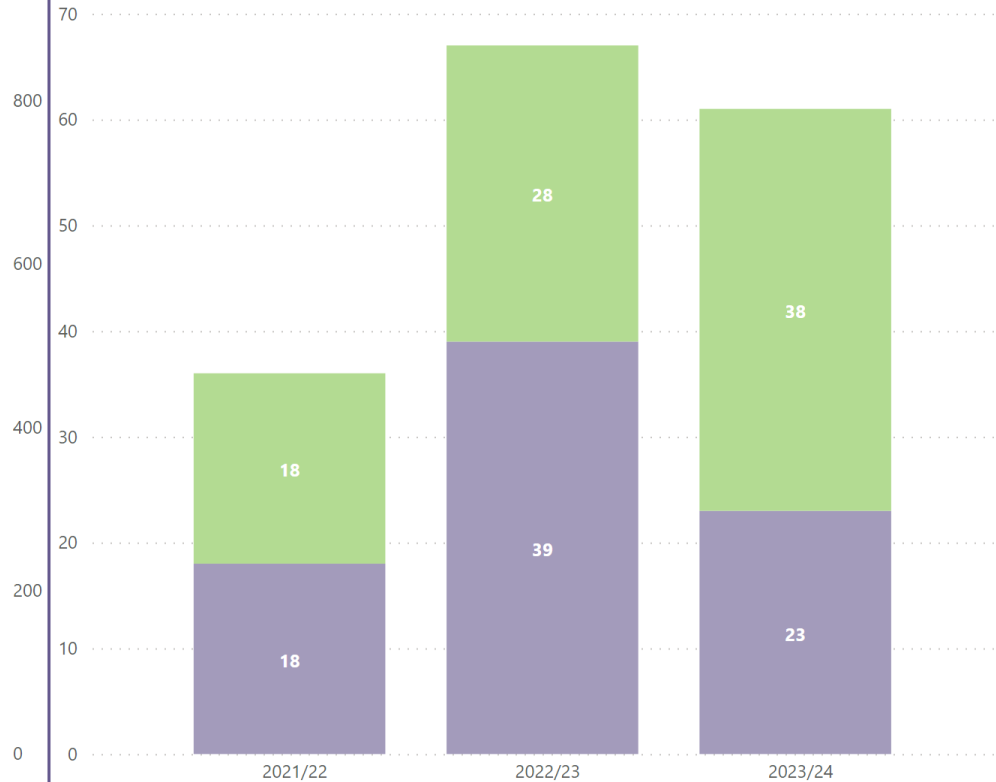
## Children's Services Sexual Abuse Assessment Factors

Sexual Abuse Sexual Abuse - by Child Sexual Abuse - by Adult Police - Recent Victims Police - Non Recent Victims



## Victims of Child Sexual Exploitation Discussed in MACE

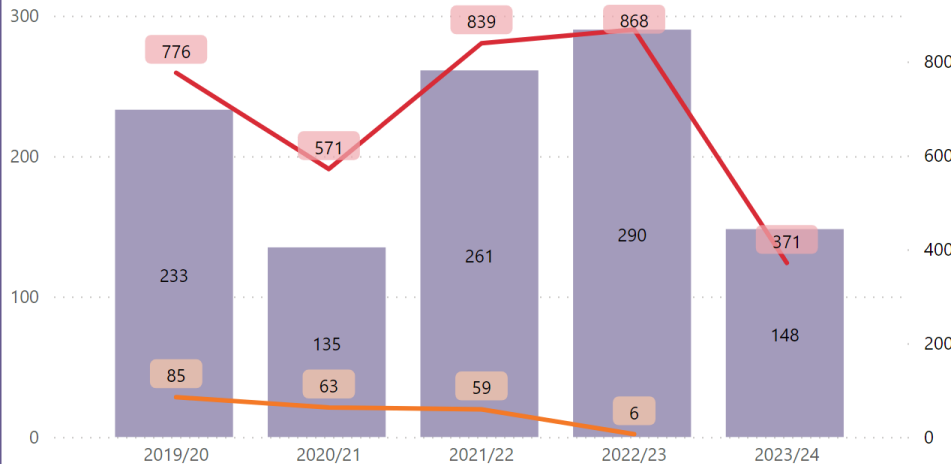
Exploitation type Both Sexual



## CHISVA Referrals

Victims below the age of 18 at time of abuse being reported

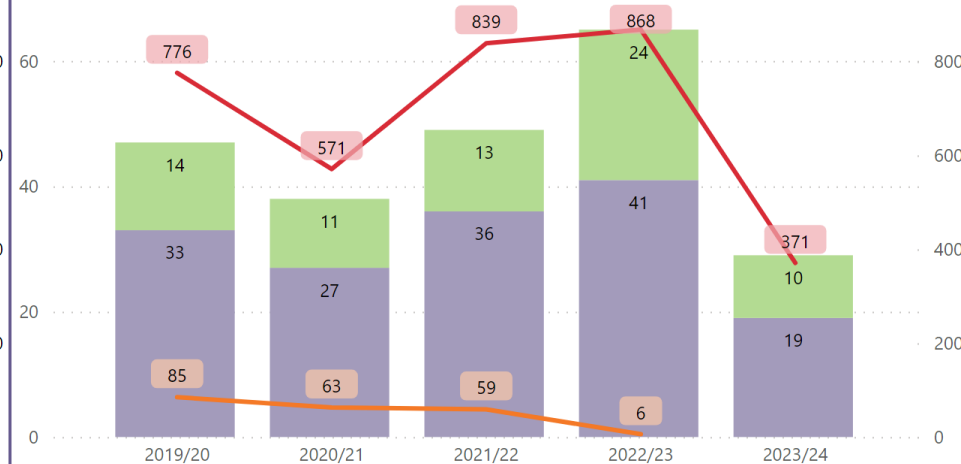
● No. of Referrals to CHISVA ● Police - Recent Victims ● Police - Non Recent Victims



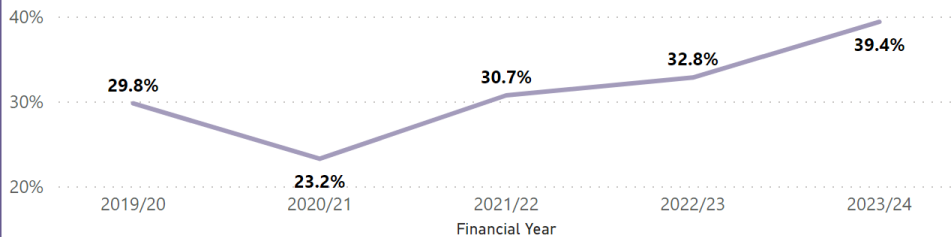
## PSARC Referrals

Victims below the age of 18 at time of abuse being reported

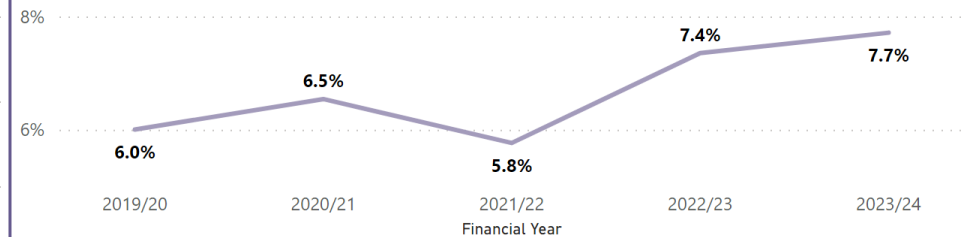
● Forensic Examinations ● Non-forensic Referrals ● Police - Recent Victims ● Police - Non Recent Victims



## % CHISVA Referrals Compared to Individuals Reported to the Police

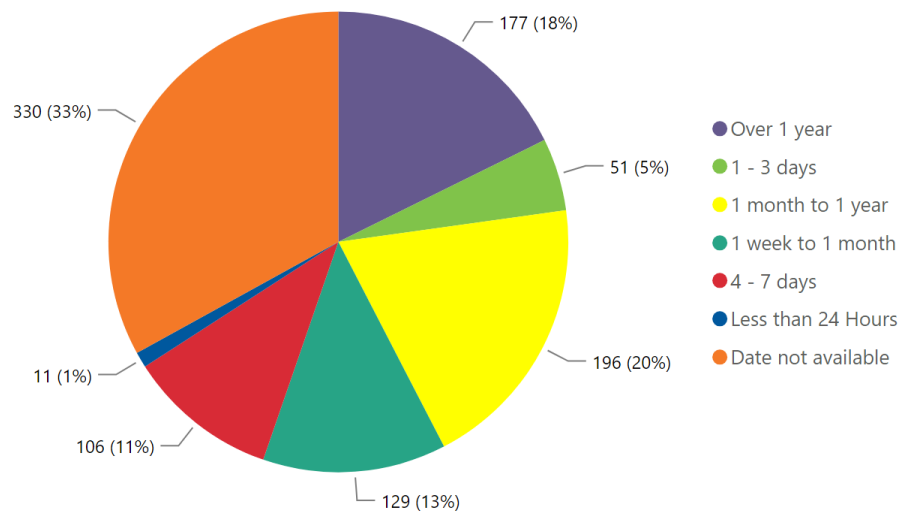


## % PSARC Referrals Compared to Individuals Reported to the Police



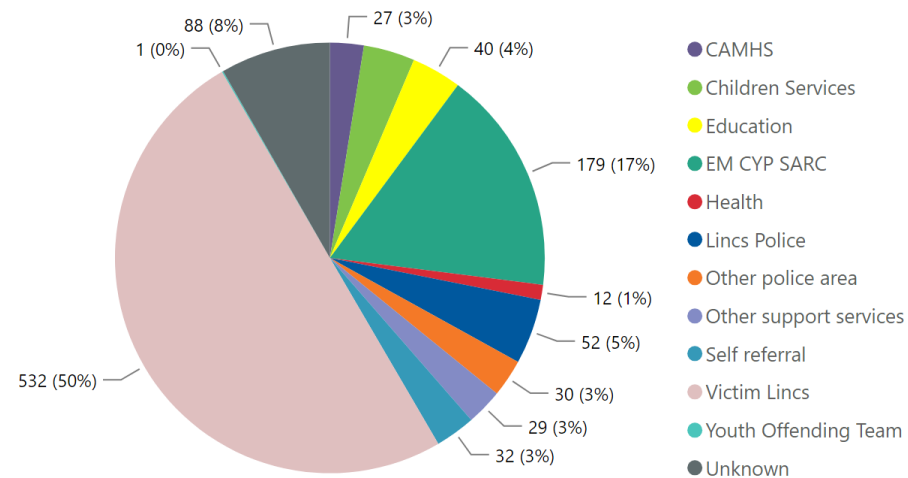
## Duration Following Offence Occurring to Referral

Victims below the age of 18 at time of abuse being reported



## Referrals Source

Victims below the age of 18 at time of abuse being reported



# Victim Lincs Referral Data



VL Referrals in

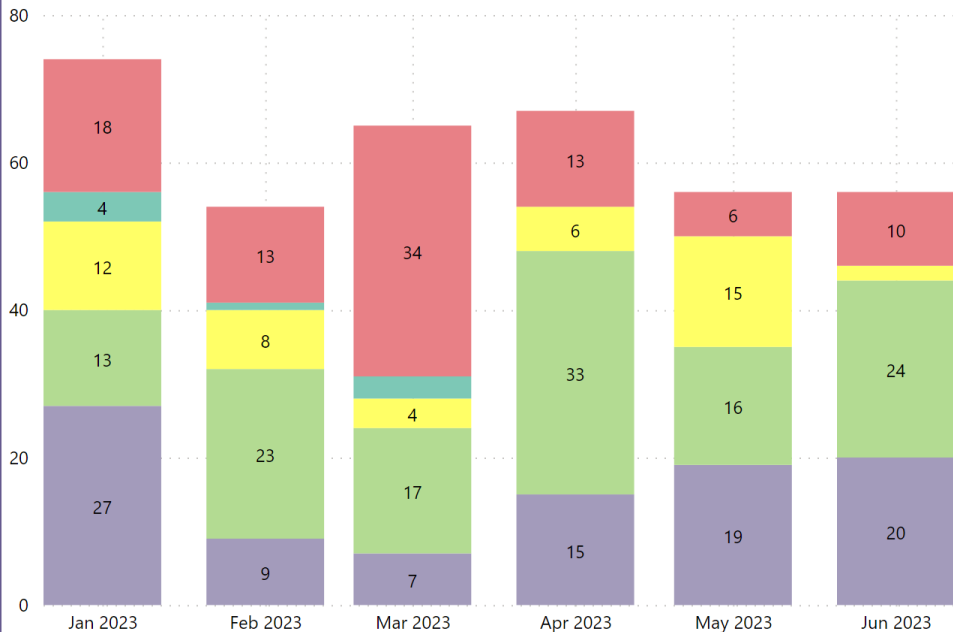
**373**

VL Onward Referrals

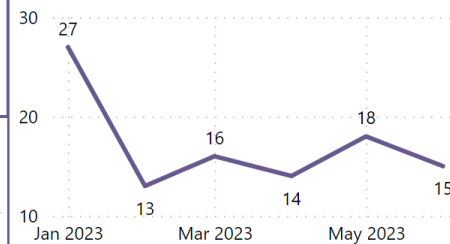
**117**

Referrals in to Victim Lincs

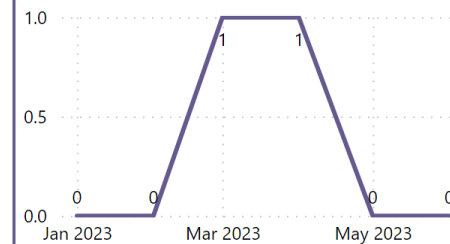
● Image/online related ● Sexual - non pen ● Sexual - pen ● Unclear /Unknown ● Sexual - rape



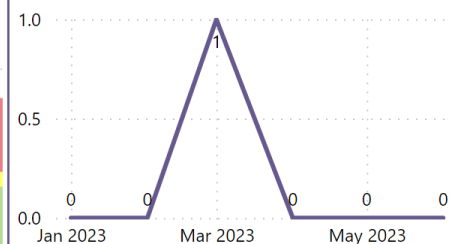
Referrals from VL to CHISVA



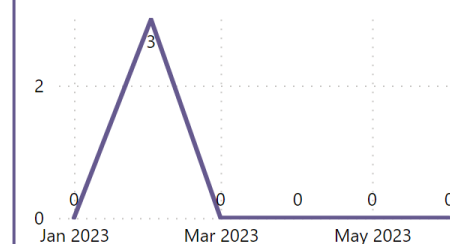
Referrals from VL to Healthy Minds



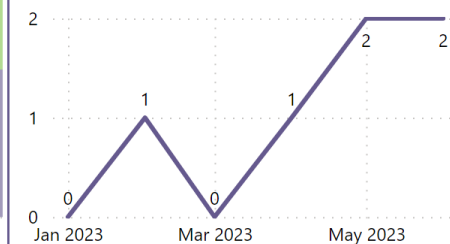
Referrals from VL to Lincs Rape Crisis



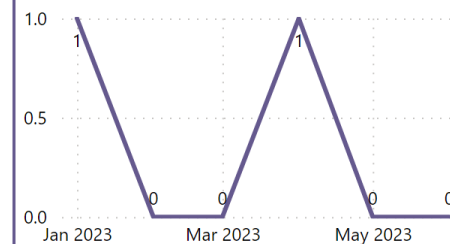
Referrals from VL to My Support Service



Referrals from VL to Out of Force Area



Referrals from VL to PSARC





# Engagement strategy



Lincolnshire  
Safeguarding  
Children's  
partnership  
planning  
together



Voluntary  
Sector Briefings



Tools for  
cascading  
information



Suite of  
training  
resources



Regular  
communications

## Pre-Response Pathway launch practitioner check-in

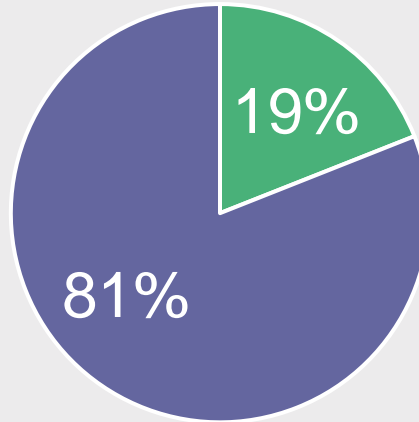
When thinking about resources and tools you use to undertake direct work with children and their families to explore child sexual abuse, please choose the option that best describes the resources you have access to?



# Professional self-rating

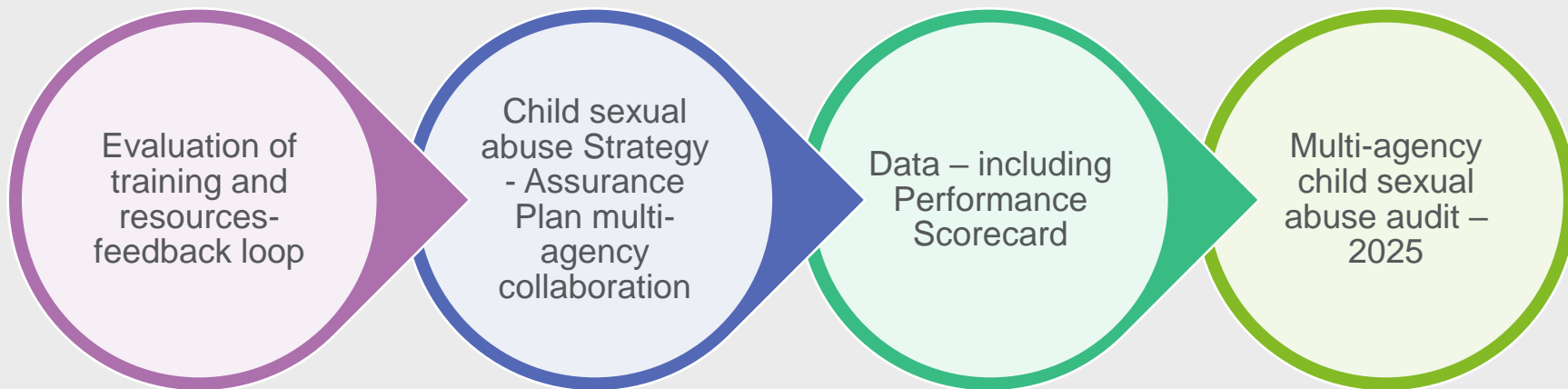
## Anonymous questionnaire post launch

Thinking about what you learned during the training: Has your confidence increased in working directly with children and young people who have been sexually abused, specifically in using resources to talk to them about what they have experienced?



- The training slightly increased my confidence
- Yes I feel more confident following training

# How we will know it's making a difference



# Pilot site: London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Building a confident workforce

Harriet Spence

Service Manager and Child Sexual Abuse Improvement lead

Barking and Dagenham Council

# Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads Programme

Recognition of the **need for improvement** and response to children where sexual abuse had taken place, or we suspect it to have taken place.

**Learning together** within the partnership at strategic level.

Importantly, this required senior management **'buy in'** at Director and Head of Service level to take effect and become best practice on our improvement journey.



# Who are our Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads?



Cohort One (Pilot) Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads training took place in 2020 and following its success and implementation within the borough, commissioning of Cohort Two took place. This is currently underway with a **total of 25 Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads either trained or undergoing training.**

Child Sexual Abuse Social Care Liaison Officer who started in post in July '22, based in Barking & Dagenham. Working between Northeast London boroughs and the Royal London Hospital child sexual abuse medical hub to **promote best practice** and signposting children for child sexual abuse **medical assessments.**

# Implementing the CSA Centre's Response Pathway

- Monthly child sexual abuse consultation clinic
- Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads reflective sessions
- Child sexual abuse resource hub
- Child sexual abuse bulletins
- Upskilling child protection chairs and independent reviewing officers in consideration of children's plans
- Sharing information with partner agencies
- Analysing children and young people who are referred through the multi-agency safeguarding hub





# Child sexual abuse consultation clinic

Consultations have been taking place since Summer 2021, initially on an ad hoc basis.

Consultation purpose: To discuss specific children, share direct work tools, consider how to undertake risk assessments, working with the child and all members of the family, **providing space and support whilst raising practitioners' confidence.**

Involvement of Social Worker, Team Manager, Child Protection Conference chair (where Child Protection case), at times other agencies.



# Child sexual abuse consultation clinic

## Impact of using the Response Pathway



More practitioners referring to the clinic and seeking to understand how the needs of the child or young person can be met throughout the Response Pathway.

CSA Centre resources are being used more widely and encouraged with other professionals, including Designated Safeguarding Leads, foster carers etc. Including: Signs & Indicators Template, Communicating with Children Guide, Supporting Parents and Carers Guide, amongst others available).

Children accessing child sexual abuse medical assessments.

When threshold is not met from police perspective.

Anxiety around closing children.

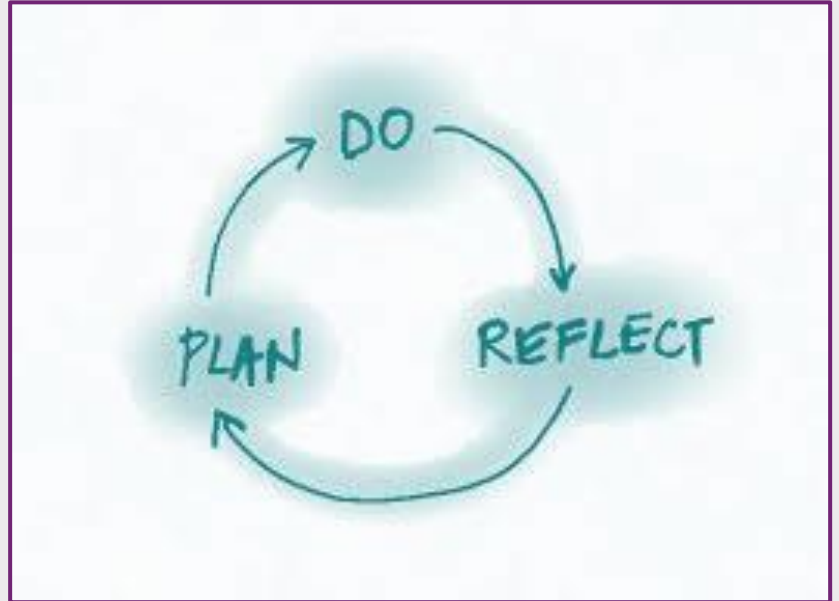
Looking after the practitioner's own wellbeing.

# Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads reflective sessions

Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads **meet regularly** and access the CSA Centre Practice Leads Network, where they can receive updating training, reflect on their role, receive updated information about research and resources that may be used in practice.

The space is one where Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads can **discuss** the work they are carrying out and how this **impacts** them, as well as how they **balance this** alongside their day-to-day role.

Sharing materials, thoughts and reflections supports Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads to **think differently** and draw on **each other** for ideas around best practice.



# Child sexual abuse resource hub



Space within Barking & Dagenham intranet which is accessible by anyone in the Council, largely used by those in Children's Social Care.

The resource hub includes:

- CSA Centre's Response Pathway.
- Up-to-date research.
- Tools and resources published by the CSA Centre: Signs & Indicators Template, Communicating with Children Guide, Supporting Parents and Carers Guide, Managing Risk and Trauma after Online Offending Guide, Sibling Sexual Abuse and Behaviour Guide.
- Referrals for services that children and their families can access.

# Child sexual abuse bulletin

Sharing updates  
about best practice

Response Pathway  
information with a  
focus on specific  
areas

Circulate and  
promote new  
guidance, tools and  
services available

Info about child  
sexual abuse  
medical  
assessments

Research available

Promotion of the  
child sexual abuse  
consultation clinic

Support available to  
staff

Emphasising  
support for other  
areas of the  
partnership

# Next Steps...

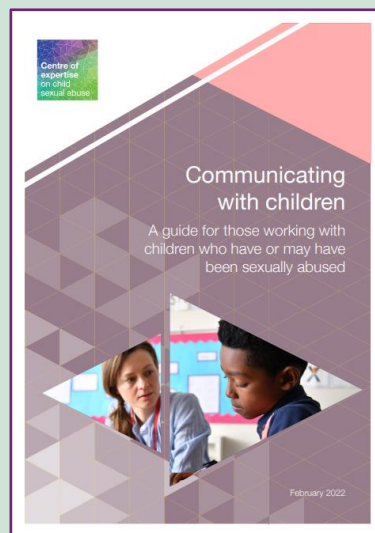


# Resources to support practice

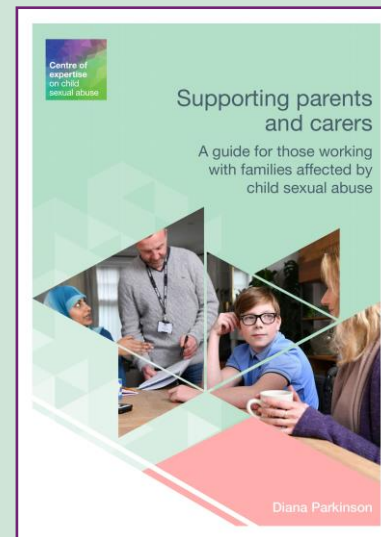
Linked to within the Response Pathway, to support professional confidence and action



A template for professionals to identify and record concerns of child sexual abuse



A guide for professionals working with children who have or may have been sexually abused

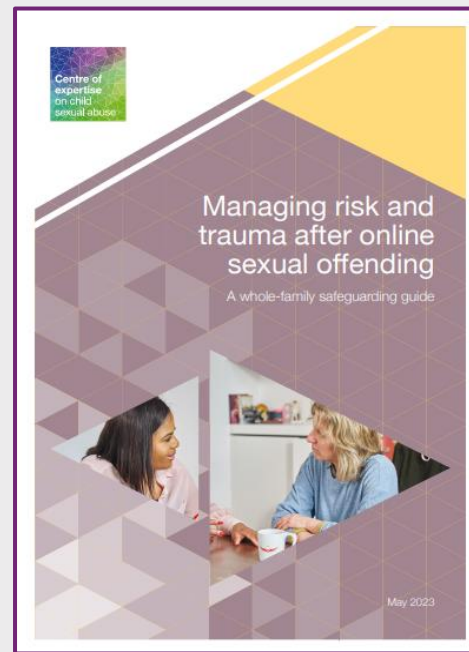
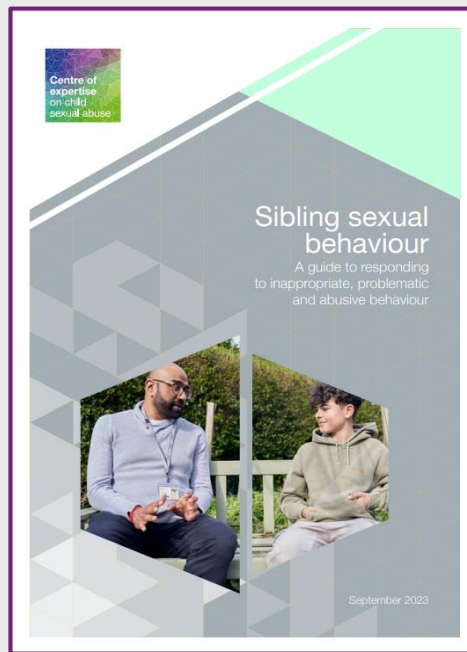
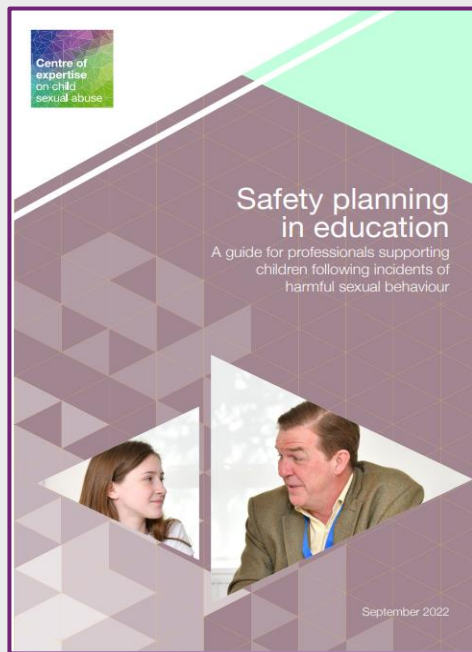


A guide for professionals working with families affected by child sexual abuse

<https://www.csacentre.org.uk/research-resources/practice-resources/>



# More practice resources



<https://www.csacentre.org.uk/research-resources/practice-resources/>

# If you are affected by anything discussed today...



## The Survivors Trust

Find help, support and advice in your area:  
<http://thesurvivorstrust.org/find-support>



## Rape Crisis helpline 0808 802 9999

[www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)



## National Association for People Abused in Childhood 0808 801 0331

<https://napac.org.uk/>



## SurvivorsUK

Online help for male survivors of sexual abuse and rape.

<https://www.survivorsuk.org/ways-we-can-help/online-helpline/>

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- ✓ News
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<https://www.csacentre.org.uk/newsletter/>



# Thank you!

For more information please contact:  
[info@csacentre.org.uk](mailto:info@csacentre.org.uk)



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06 December 2023