



The purpose of this strategy and practice guidance, (provided by CSA Centre of Expertise & NSPCC) is to prevent, identify and respond to CSA within the city of Plymouth. We know that CSA remains the most under reported category of abuse for children placed on child protection plans in Plymouth but **more than one in ten children have been sexually abused by the age of 16, that's 15% of girls and 5% of boys**, and it remains one of our strategic priorities. This strategy, in conjunction with practice guidance, will improve the local understanding of the prevalence of CSA, support professionals, and improve identification and response to CSA across all agencies working together.

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Working Together to safeguard children 2023

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children."

Our Key Principles

1. Child Focused – safety, wellbeing and development of child is the overriding priority
2. Listen to children, both verbal and non-verbal and understand their lives
3. Consistency of practice supported with emotional safety
4. Collaboration of professionals for effectiveness, creating CSA Champions and a community of practice
5. Whole family approach
6. Across Early Help – ensure early recognition of signs and indicators of child sexual abuse
7. Risk Management – improved safety planning on harmful sexual behaviour / intrafamilial CSA
8. Enable parents and carers to have knowledge of healthy sexual development and be able to recognise indicators of child sexual abuse and how to respond
9. Recognising children with additional needs and disabilities & those care experienced may be more at risk vulnerable to CSA.

Our Priorities

1. Multi-agency sign up to, and embedding of strategy and ownership of delivery plan
2. Focussing on prevention of CSA ensuring we sustain and implement the learning from Together for Childhood.
3. Increase in Child Protection Plans for CSA
4. All agencies will be supported to use practice tools from CSA Centre of Expertise to support a broad response across different contexts
5. A confident and emotionally resilient workforce - Improve confidence in all professionals to raise concerns and act on CSA especially intrafamilial abuse
6. Ensure children receive the support they need to recover from CSA and that we use interventions required to assess and intervene to prevent harmful sexual behaviour

Types of Child Sexual Abuse and scope of our work

There are two types of sexual abuse – contact and non-contact abuse. And sexual abuse can happen in person or online. The following are contexts where abuse occurs.

1. Intrafamilial child sexual abuse (including sibling sexual abuse)
2. Harmful sexual behaviour
3. Harmful sexual behaviour involving peers
4. Group based child sexual abuse
5. Institutional child sexual abuse
6. Child sexual abuse in an online context
7. Child sexual exploitation

To aid thinking you may wish to have a look at CSA Centre of Expertise [Typology](#) of adult, child sexual abuse offending. Plymouth is committed to working on community-based prevention for adults who harm/ or are at risk of sexually harming.

Child's Voice & What CSA survivors say needs to change

The public, police and statutory agencies do not always believe children due to fear and embarrassment

The scale of sexual abuse is underestimated in society

It is very difficult for victims and survivors to report sexual abuse, many are ignored and not taken seriously

Adults around children often fail to notice that they are being sexually abused, despite clear signs and indicators

All institutions involved with children must be proactive and vigilant to sexual abuse

Children and families want support and services that are easy to access and delivered in a way that allows them to tell their story once

How will we measure and communicate positive change for our children and families?

1. Staff across agencies will report increased confidence in identifying and responding to CSA
2. Plymouth will have a clearer data picture on number of children affected by CSA and whether they have received a recovery service/support
3. We will develop a commissioning plan for gaps in support for CSA Recovery and HSB referrals, assessment, and interventions
4. We will agree a detailed partnership delivery plan that identifies multi-agency roles and responsibilities to preventing and responding to CSA
5. Children will tell us they have people to tell who believe them and take action