

The purpose of this strategy and linked 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 CSA Centre practice guidance, will provide a local understanding of the prevalence of CSA, support our practitioners, 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.”

Types of Child Sexual Abuse and scope of our work

- Intrafamilial child sexual abuse (including sibling sexual abuse)
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Harmful sexual behaviour involving peers
- Group based child sexual abuse
- Institutional child sexual abuse
- Child sexual abuse in an online context
- 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.

Our Priorities

- Multi-agency sign-up, to and embedding of strategy and ownership of delivery plan.
- Focussing on prevention of CSA ensuring we sustain and implement the learning from Together for Childhood.
- Improve early identification of CSA to prevent abuse and support the child [CSA Centre Signs and Indicators of Tool](#)
- Increase in Child Protection Plans for CSA.
- All agencies will be supported to use practice tools from CSA Centre of Expertise to support a broad response to CSA across different contexts.
- A confident and emotionally resilient workforce - Improve confidence in all professionals to raise concerns and take action on CSA especially intrafamilial abuse.
- Ensure children receive the support they need to recover from CSA and that we use interventions required to assess and intervene to prevent HSB.

Our Key Principles

- Child Focused – safety, wellbeing and development of child is the overriding priority.
- Listen to children and understand their lives.
- Consistency of practice supported with emotional safety.
- Collaboration of professionals for effectiveness.
- Whole family approach.
- Across Early Help – ensure early recognition of signs of signs and indicators of CSA.
- Risk Management – improved safety planning on HSB / intrafamilial CSA
- 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.
- Inclusive – recognising children with additional needs and disabilities and care experienced CYP may be more vulnerable to CSA.

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.
- All institutions involved with children must be proactive and vigilant to sexual abuse. (IICSA)

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

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