

Learning From The National Review into Child Sexual Abuse Within The Family Environment – “I Wanted Them All to Notice”

Overview

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s national review (“I Wanted Them All to Notice”) highlights critical gaps in how professionals identify and respond to child sexual abuse (CSA) within the family environment. The review, published in November 2024, examines systemic issues and provides recommendations for improvement.

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“I wanted them all to notice”

Protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment

November 2024

Key Findings from the Review

Not Relying on Children to Disclose Abuse

- Many safeguarding responses depend on children speaking out, yet research shows most do not disclose abuse. Professionals must proactively recognise signs rather than wait for disclosures.

Talking to and Listening to Children

- Children often communicate distress in subtle ways that are overlooked. Professionals must create safe spaces, listen actively, and take concerns seriously.

Believing Children When They Do Tell

- A lack of belief in children’s disclosures has led to inaction and further harm. It is essential to take every disclosure seriously and act accordingly.

Considering Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

- Safeguarding responses must be culturally literate. Failure to explore and consider children’s racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds can create barriers to protection and support.

Understanding Parents’ and Carers’ Needs and Contexts

- Parents and carers may have complex needs that impact their ability to safeguard children.
- Professional support must consider family dynamics, mental health, and socio-economic factors.

Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities

- Children with disabilities face greater risks of CSA but are often overlooked in safeguarding practices.
- Communication methods and safeguarding approaches must be adapted to meet their needs.

Weak Multi-Agency Responses

- Poor information-sharing and lack of coordinated efforts have led to missed opportunities for intervention. Stronger collaboration between agencies is essential.

Inadequate Risk Awareness

- Over a third of cases involved a known sexual offender within the family, yet risk assessments often failed to protect children. Clearer frameworks are needed to assess and manage risk effectively.

Long-Term Impact on Victims

- Survivors often experience mental health challenges, including self-harm, depression, and, in some cases, suicide. Timely intervention and long-term support are crucial.

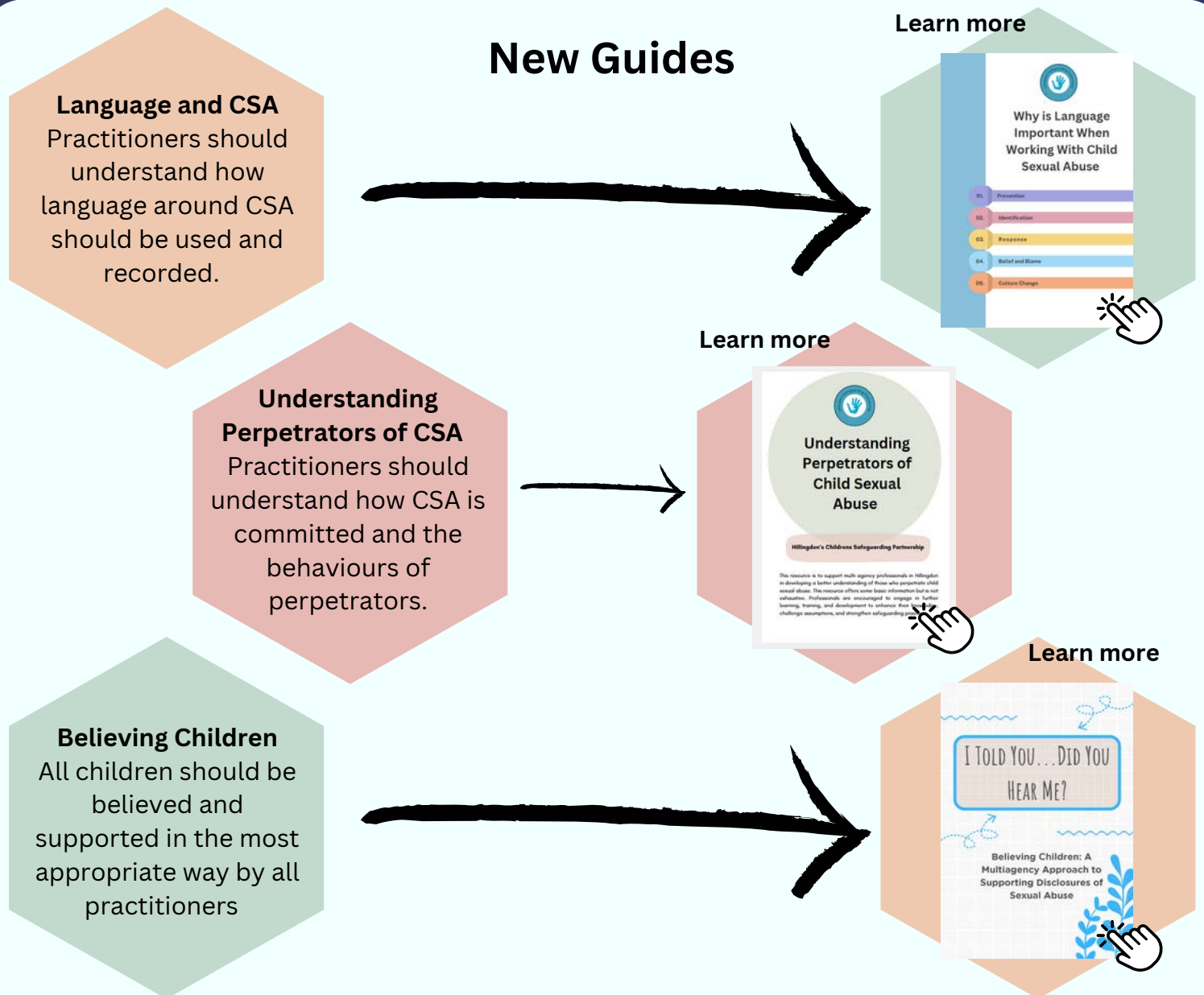
Identifying Signs, Understanding Risk, and Raising Concerns

- Quality risk assessment for sexual offending must be prioritised to ensure children are safeguarded effectively.
- Exploration and recording of concerns should be thorough, ensuring clear documentation that supports intervention.

The report urges a national action plan to strengthen safeguarding responses, improve professional training, and ensure all children receive the protection and support they need. Multi-agency partners must work together to implement these findings, ensuring a proactive and victim-centred approach to tackling CSA within the family environment.



The CSA National Review provides local recommendations to ensure that lessons learned from cases of CSA lead to meaningful changes in safeguarding practices. These recommendations are designed to strengthen multiagency responses, improve professional awareness, and enhance early intervention efforts at a local level. By addressing systemic weaknesses and identifying best practices, the review aims to support local safeguarding partners such as social care, police, health services, and education—in developing more effective strategies to protect children. Next, local safeguarding partnerships are expected to assess these recommendations against their existing policies, implement necessary changes, and monitor their impact. This may involve updating procedures, delivering targeted training, or enhancing data-sharing mechanisms.



Need to Know

Evidence Risk, Don't Assume It: Risk isn't always obvious.

Practitioners need to capture all factors, not just the immediate signs, to build a full picture of potential harm, making sure their decisions are backed by solid evidence.

Don't Wait for a Disclosure:

Practitioners should focus on recognising signs of abuse, ensuring that children feel safe and supported even without formal disclosure.

Support Doesn't End with Police:

A closed investigation doesn't mean the journey is over. Continuous support is essential for recovery; whether through therapy, community resources, or ongoing welfare checks.

Engage with Perpetrators, Evidence Progress:

Work with perpetrators where possible, documenting their engagement or interventions. This helps build a fuller picture and supports both victim protection and long-term change.

Shift the Language, Shift the Culture:

Language shapes the way we think and act. Practitioners should lead efforts to change how we talk about abuse—using language that is non-judgmental, trauma-informed, and empowering for victims.

National Changes Emerging From The Review

Emerging

Following the publication of the national review "I Wanted Them All to Notice", several national initiatives are being considered or underway to tackle child sexual abuse (CSA) within the family environment:

Mandatory Reporting Legislation – The government has proposed new legislation to make it a criminal offence for professionals to fail to report suspected or known child sexual abuse. This aims to ensure that those in positions of trust have a legal duty to act on concerns.

Sentencing Reforms – There are proposals to recognise grooming as an aggravating factor in sentencing, leading to tougher penalties for offenders who abuse positions of trust to exploit children.

Online Safety Act 2023 – The introduction of this Act requires stricter age verification measures to protect children from online exploitation. **However, concerns have been raised that the legislation does not include pre-screening for child sexual abuse images, highlighting the need for further action.**

Embedded

Cafcass's new Domestic Abuse Practice Policy states:

Family Court Advisers (FCAs) and Children's Guardians will no longer use terms like 'claims' or 'alleges' in court reports, instead using the direct words of children and adult victims. It is for the court to determine the facts.

The default position is that a **child should NOT spend time with a parent under police investigation for a sexual offence, with a conviction for such an offence, or who has served a prison sentence for violent or sexual offences, due to the significant risk of harm to both the child and the non-abusive parent.**

If FCAs or Children's Guardians recommend contact despite these risks, they must provide clear and compelling justification in their reports, particularly where domestic abuse is known, reported, or under investigation.

[> LEARN MORE](#)




Professional Development

▶ WEBINAR

Learning from the Child Sexual Abuse national review - “I wanted them all to notice” Webinar

Wednesday 9th April 2025 12:00-13:30
Online via Teams

BOOK HERE 

▶ WEBINAR

Improving Awareness of the Support Available to Children Affected by Child Sexual Abuse

Facilitated by The Havens, TIGER Light and the
NWL Social Care Liaison Officer (SCLO)
Thursday 3rd April 12:00-13:00
online via Teams

BOOK HERE 

▶ WEBINAR

Understanding The Probation Service in Hillingdon

17th June 2025 12:00 - 13:30
Online via Teams

BOOK HERE 



Child Exploitation Awareness Day 18th March 2025 includes a ‘Focus on Child Sexual Exploitation’




Multiagency Training 2025/2026 training offer

1. Child Sexual Abuse & Disability: Understanding the risks and the professional role
2. Intrafamilial Child Sexual Abuse
3. Civil Orders for Sexual and Violent Offending
4. Child Sexual Abuse in the Context of CSE
5. Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool
6. Grooming & CSA awareness and prevention

Learning zone 

Intra-familial child sexual abuse eLearning

A free course for all professionals working with children on Identifying and responding to CSA

eLearning | CSA Centre 

Other Briefings on Child Sexual Abuse Related Topics



CSA 7 Minute Briefing



Harmful Sexual Behaviour What Professionals Need to Know



Sibling Sexual Abuse What Professionals Need to Know

Prevention Resources for CSA



Stop it Now, from the Lucy Faithful Foundation provide advice, support, and online self-help resources for people concerned about their thoughts and behaviour towards children, whether online or offline.

The NSPCC Talk PANTS Campaign is a prevention message to teach children so they are able to speak up about things that make them feel unsafe/uncomfortable and to support them to understand their rights in a safe and child friendly way



Shore has anonymous advice and support to help young people manage worrying thoughts and learn more about living safely both online and offline.

Identification Resources for CSA



Intra-familial child sexual abuse eLearning
A free course for all professionals working with children on Identifying and responding to CSA



Knowing the signs of sexual abuse can help give a voice to children and can get support for that child earlier on. Sometimes children won't understand that what's happening to them is wrong. Or they might be scared to speak out. Know the signs.

[eLearning | CSA Centre](#)

Find resources on:

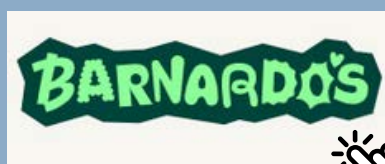
1. Signs and indicators of Child Sexual Abuse
2. Signs and indicators template
3. Communicating with children
4. medical examinations information
5. Sibling Sexual Abuse and Behaviour

Response Resources for CSA



LUCY FAITHFUL FOUNDATION Family Safety Plan - This plan will help you put safety measures in place to respond to any concerns and potential risks relating to child sexual abuse.

Early emotional support for children and young people 3-18 years old (and their families) who have disclosed sexual abuse



Find resources on:

- Supporting Parents and Carers
- Using Supervision and Team Meetings
- Resources for Education Settings
- Managing risk and Trauma After online sexual offending