



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

Working Together to Safeguard People

National Action Plan Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse

FINAL REPORT ON DELIVERY OF ACTIONS UNDER THE PLAN



November 2022

National Action Plan

Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse

Issued under Section 28 of the Children Act 2004

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MINISTER'S FOREWORD

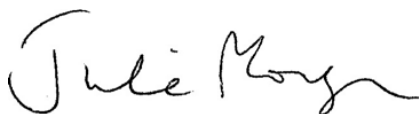
I issued a [Written Statement](#) in July 2019, announcing the publication of the National Action Plan on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse. The Welsh Government is wholly committed to making Wales a place where children are listened to, have access to high quality, child-centred help and can realise their right to be protected from harm.

The Covid-19 pandemic had an obvious impact on our public services and the work of our regional Safeguarding Boards in Wales. In 2020 I agreed an additional six-month delivery period for the actions under the Plan. I am pleased that despite the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic our partners continued to progress this important work with the Welsh Government.

This report sets out what has been delivered under the Plan between July 2019 and June 2022. Much has been achieved and I am grateful to the regional Safeguarding Boards for their work and to the specialist organisations who have assisted in developing resources and training under the Plan. I would also like to give my thanks to the children, young people and adult survivors who have worked with organisations to inform this work.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Cross-Party Group on preventing child sexual abuse have provided constructive scrutiny of delivery throughout this period and I am grateful for this.

Welsh Government will work with partners on developing a new National Action Plan, as well as drawing on, where appropriate, the findings of the recently published Report by IICSA, to make sure that we do everything we can to protect children and young people in Wales from sexual and other forms of abuse.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Julie Morgan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Julie' and last name 'Morgan' clearly distinguishable.

Julie Morgan, MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services

Introduction

The words 'child' and 'children' are used throughout this Plan to mean any person up to the age of 18.

The [National Action Plan - Preventing and responding to child sexual abuse](#) ('the Plan') considered Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB).

The Plan included actions for the Welsh Government to prevent Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), to protect children from CSA and to support children who are sexually abused. The Plan also included actions for the Safeguarding Board partners who had a lead role in implementation of the Plan.

This document provides information on the delivery of actions under the Plan and identifies areas where further work is required.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published its final report in October 2022. The Welsh Government has engaged with the important work of the inquiry since it was established in 2015.

The Welsh Government is giving full consideration to the IICSA recommendations for Wales. We will also consider the issues identified for further action in this document. Engagement will be undertaken with key stakeholders including children and young people to reflect on what has been achieved and inform future work on this important issue.

Some examples of the way in which Safeguarding Children Boards have delivered against actions under the Plan have been highlighted throughout the report. This is intended to illustrate some of the good work that has taken place and does not suggest that action was only taken in some regions.

Summary

The table below sets out what has been achieved through the delivery of the Plan and issues to be considered for the next phase of national work on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse.

Arrangements for the PREVENTION of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)	
Objective 1: Challenge public attitudes towards CSA and support a culture where talking about CSA is not seen as a taboo subject in a way that can be exploited by perpetrators.	
What has been achieved	What do we need to think about for the next phase of work
A successful campaign that has been widely promoted by Safeguarding Children Boards throughout the delivery period for the Plan.	Child sexual abuse is a challenging topic for people, for obvious reasons. It will be important to consider further work to support public awareness and break the silence around child sexual abuse.
Objective 2: Increased awareness in children of the importance of safe, equal, and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.	
What has been achieved	What do we need to think about for the next phase of work
<p>Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) under the new Curriculum is now established as a mandatory education offer. Under RSE, learners will learn about more than sex in a biological sense, but a broader concept of sexuality and what constitutes a healthy (and an unhealthy) relationship.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is working with partners to develop an action plan that will set out current and proposed future actions to tackle the issue of peer-on-peer sexual harassment in education settings against identified key themes.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is also creating new guidance to support education settings to develop a culture and environment that is LGBTQ+ inclusive and supports rights and gender equity. This guidance will set out how practitioners can support children in Wales to grow up free from damaging</p>	The Welsh Government needs to consider the best ways to support a national approach to referral pathways for children who display inappropriate sexualised behaviour, including consideration of existing good practice.

<p>and limiting ideas around gender roles. It will also set out the importance of listening to children and young people, and empowering them to call out unacceptable behaviours, such as sexual harassment or prejudice-related bullying. We have developed information specifically for children and young people on the issue of 'Online grooming', to help them recognise inappropriate contact online and increase their understanding about what to do and what support they can access if this happens.</p>	
<p>Objective 3: Increased awareness of how help to keep children safe from CSA for parent/carers, practitioners, and the public.</p>	
<p>What has been achieved</p>	<p>What do we need to think about for the next phase of work</p>
<p>The Welsh Government has commissioned several organisations to develop resources and learning offers to raise awareness for parent/carers, practitioners, and the public of how to help keep children safe from CSA because of the National Action Plan.</p> <p>There are a wide range of resources and open access learning offers in place.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Children Boards have all demonstrated strong delivery on these actions. Creating opportunities to promote resources and engaging with specialist organisations to provide training.</p> <p>We have worked with the Education Team at NCA-CEOP (National Crime Agency – Child Exploitation and Online Protection) Command to make their key education resources, which aim to empower and protect children and young people from sexual abuse and exploitation, available bilingually on the Keeping safe online area of Hwb.</p> <p>In 2021 we partnered with the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) to launch their</p>	<p>Changes in the workforce overtime mean that there will be new practitioners who require support with understanding and responding to child sexual abuse.</p> <p>Work to make parent/carers aware of the available resources must also continue.</p> <p>Safeguarding Children Boards have a central role here and practitioners have a role in promoting these resources with the families they work with.</p> <p>The Welsh Government needs to think about the best way to sustain learning for workforces across agencies.</p>

<p>online grooming prevention campaign bilingually through Hwb. The campaign aims to empower children and young people to spot the signs of online grooming and exploitation, and to warn their parents and carers about this threat, which can often occur in plain sight, on popular platforms and apps.</p>	
<p>Objective 4: Increased awareness of how corporate safeguarding can contribute to the prevention of CSA.</p>	
<p>What has been achieved</p>	<p>What do we need to think about for the next phase of work</p>
<p>A corporate safeguarding guide is now in place and available from the WLGA.</p> <p>Safeguarding Children Boards had limited time to bring this to the attention of partners in order that they review their own policies against it, this work has started.</p> <p>Each region has in some way considered learning from Contextual Safeguarding on safer spaces and places.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government needs to consider the best ways to support consistent corporate safeguarding approaches across Wales.</p>
<p>Arrangements for the PROTECTION of children at risk of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)</p>	
<p>Objective 5: Increased awareness in children of safe ways to disclose sexual abuse or risk of sexual abuse and of what should happen when they tell.</p>	
<p>What has been achieved</p>	<p>What do we need to think about for the next phase of work</p>
<p>Resources for children have been developed and made available and all Safeguarding Boards have worked to promote information for children about speaking out and getting help through their networks, with a particular focus on schools and colleges.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government will consider what more can be done to make sure that the information for children is available and shared in the places and spaces they use, including online/social media.</p>

Objective 6: Increased awareness in non-abusing parent/carers of what should happen if a child is sexually abused, of how to support children and of how to access support for themselves.

What has been achieved

A resource for non-abusing parents has been made available and Safeguarding Children Boards have promoted this information.

What do we need to think about for the next phase of work

The Welsh Government needs to consider how to best achieve the routine sharing of information with non-abusing parents.

Objective 7: Practitioners have access to resources and training to equip them to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to children at risk of or abused through CSA.

What has been achieved

The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse and Stop it Now Wales/ the Lucy Faithfull Foundation have played a key role in supporting the Safeguarding Children Boards through workshops and training to support learning and promote practitioner resources.

A new All Wales Practice Guide on safeguarding children from child sexual abuse includes links to the practice resources developed under the Plan. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board is currently considering a final draft of the *All-Wales Practice Guide on safeguarding children from child sexual abuse* for publication with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

What do we need to think about for the next phase of work

This is still an area of practice where services and practitioners are building confidence. The Welsh Government will work in partnership with the Safeguarding Children Boards to consider how learning in this area of practice can be sustained.

Arrangements for the SUPPORT of children who are sexually abused.

Objective 8: Evidence on the prevalence of CSA is collated to inform the planning of services for children who have been sexually abused.

What has been achieved

Five of the six Safeguarding Children Boards are already progressing work on systems and approaches to capturing evidence on the prevalence of child

What do we need to think about for the next phase of work

The Welsh Government will consider the best way to monitor the impact of these practice tools in improving identification of and evidence about the

<p>sexual abuse in their region. A good practice example has been put forward in relation to Powys that can inform other areas.</p> <p>The new <i>All Wales Practice Guide on safeguarding children from child sexual abuse</i> once agreed by the Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board includes a link to the Signs & Indicators Template - CSA Centre from the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse. This practice tool will be useful in improving the identification of child sexual abuse. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board has also established a working group to develop a practice tool to support the identification of child sexual exploitation (CSE).</p> <p>The Welsh Government has worked with stakeholders to develop a Performance and Improvement Framework for Social Services to help local authorities measure and improve the performance of their social services, this includes monitoring data on children at risk of abuse, neglect to harm Social services performance measures for local authorities GOV.WALES</p>	<p>nature and prevalence of child sexual abuse in Wales.</p>
<p>Objective 9: Children who have been sexually abused, sexually abused through CSE and/or have HSB have access to trauma-informed services and appropriate therapeutic support based on their individual care and support needs to improve well-being and prevent repeat abuse.</p>	
<p>What has been achieved</p>	<p>What do we need to think about for the next phase of work</p>
<p>The NHS Wales Health Collaborative, Wales Sexual Assault Referral Services Programme and Traumatic Stress Wales are both considering trauma-informed services and appropriate therapeutic support for children who have been abused through child sexual abuse. This work is on-going.</p> <p>Welsh Government are working with Traumatic Stress Wales and the ACE</p>	<p>Mapping work being undertaken by Traumatic Stress Wales can inform the work of the Safeguarding Children Boards partners.</p>

Support Hub to develop an implementation plan for the trauma-informed Wales framework.	
Objective 10: Children who have been sexually abused are given information about and appropriately referred into adult support services as they approach 18 years of age.	
What has been achieved	What do we need to think about for the next phase of work
A leaflet with information about support in adulthood has been developed and promoted. The NHS Wales Health Collaborative, Welsh Sexual Assault Referral Services Programme Team have delivered a social media campaign to let people know about services.	Work to widely promote information for adult survivors of child sexual abuse needs to continue, including information for children coming up to the age of 18 years.

Arrangements for the PREVENTION of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

The best way to respond to CSA is to stop it happening in the first place. We need to promote a better understanding of CSA for children, their families, practitioners, organisations, and the public so that they can recognise risk and respond to CSA.

Objective 1: Challenge public attitudes towards CSA and support a culture where talking about CSA is not seen as a taboo subject in a way that can be exploited by perpetrators

Actions 1 and 2

Welsh Government commissioned Stop it Now Wales /The Lucy Faithfull Foundation to develop a campaign launched in March 2020. These open access resources aimed to help break the silence around child sexual abuse.

Safeguarding Children Boards all publicised the campaign materials through social media and through partner networks.



Looking forward

The campaign materials were widely disseminated at different times throughout the delivery period for the Plan. However, child sexual abuse is a challenging topic for people, for obvious reasons. It will be important to consider future campaigns to support public awareness and break the silence around child sexual abuse.

Objective 2: Increased awareness in children of the importance of safe, equal, and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong

Understanding how relationships are formed, developed, and maintained enables us to develop the skills and attitudes for us to create healthy relationships of our own. It supports children to develop the knowledge and skills needed to effectively navigate these rapidly changing influences and establish respectful, fulfilling relationships throughout their lives. These may include family relationships, friendships, professional relationships, and sexual relationships. It can also help children to recognise when things are happening in their relationships with others that are not healthy or appropriate.

Early intervention and support for children who have inappropriate sexual behaviour is important to prevent behaviour escalating into harmful sexual behaviour. This means supporting children as soon as we can and undertaking work to understand what is behind the behaviour and whether children have care and support needs.

Action 3

Welsh Government published a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code in January 2022. The Code contains mandatory requirements, the legal basis for which is set out in the [Summary of legislation - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/summary-of-legislation-hwb) of the Curriculum

for Wales framework guidance. It sets out the themes and matters that must be encompassed in RSE. A curriculum and teaching and learning must encompass the mandatory element of RSE outlined within the RSE Code.

Actions 4 and 5

The **Welsh Government** commissioned Welsh Women's Aid to develop [resources](#) for education settings to help children think about healthy relationships and issues like consent.



Safe and healthy relationships

COVID-19: The new rules mean that lots of us can't meet up with friends, partners, and other people we care about and have relationships with. Many of us will be online and on our phones a lot more, keeping relationships going and maybe starting new ones.

Relationships might be changing, but the questions stay the same:
Does my relationship feel:
Safe?
Trusting?
And
Respectful?

EVERYBODY has the right to feel safe and respected.

Take this [quiz](#) to see if your relationship is healthy!

Relationships Online
Consent is important in all relationships, including online. For advice, links to support, and information on reporting online abuse or harassment, [click here](#).

In an unhealthy relationship? Experiencing abuse?
For advice on what to do if you do not feel safe and respected in your relationship or in your home, [click here](#).

Coping with past abuse?
If you've experienced any kind of abuse in the past and need advice or help or someone to talk to, [click here](#).

Controlling or Caring?
Controlling your partner is not OK. It's important to know the difference between being caring, and being controlling. To learn more, and for advice and support to change, [click here](#).

Live Fear Free Helpline 0808 80 10 800
Llinell Gymerth Byr Web Cffn
Cymorth i Ferched Cymru Welsh Women's Aid

All the **Safeguarding Children Boards** have promoted the resources, working with Education leads, through workshops, through campaigns and through partner communication networks.

Action 6

Safeguarding Children Boards were actioned to report that local and/or regional referral pathways for children who display inappropriate sexualised behaviour are in place, as recommended in NICE guidance.

While all Boards reported action under this area, all but one reported that had been a challenging action to deliver against. Neath Port Talbot has developed a Pathway and West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board report that work in needed on costs to roll this out across the region (into Swansea). North Wales Safeguarding Board reported an example of good practice in Gwynedd.

CYSUR Safeguarding Board suggested that a national approach to this work would be helpful, drawing on existing examples of good practice.

North Wales Safeguarding Children Board

At the NWSB conference during National Safeguarding Week 2021, the good practice example given by Gwynedd Council was shared - *Establishment and work of the Emrallt Team in Gwynedd*.

The development of a multi-agency team which includes practitioners from Youth Justice / Social Worker / Education and Health. The focus of the Emrallt Team was to ensure a more effective response to cases where children display inappropriate sexualised behaviour. The team have focused on the development of effective early intervention/ prevention approach across the Local Authority. Other objectives have included:

- To aim for a reduction in the number of cases and referrals into social services following harmful sexual behaviour.
- Developing an awareness across the authority of inappropriate sexualised behaviour and the way that the behaviour is presented

Multi agency working enables different services to join forces to prevent problems occurring in the first instance. They provide benefits for children, young people and their families as a tailor-made support package can be offered in the most efficient way.

Looking forward

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) under the new Curriculum is now established as a mandatory education offer. Under RSE, learners will learn about more than sex in a biological sense, but a broader concept of sexuality and what constitutes a healthy (and an unhealthy) relationship.

The Welsh Government is working with partners to develop an action plan that will set out current and proposed future actions to tackle the issue of peer-on-peer sexual harassment in education settings against identified key themes.

The Welsh Government will consider the best ways to support a national approach to referral pathways for children who display inappropriate sexualised behaviour, including consideration of existing good practice, in planning the next phase of work.

Objective 3: Increased awareness of how help to keep children safe from CSA for parent/carers, practitioners and the public

Child sexual abuse is a particularly hidden and underreported form of abuse. Equipping the adults in children's lives to understand child sexual abuse, how to spot the signs of abuse and how to keep children safe is crucial in preventing child sexual abuse.

Actions 7 and 8



The **Welsh Government** had already commissioned Stop it Now Wales/Lucy Faithfull Foundation to produce resources for parent/carers in 2018. The 'What we all need to know' child sexual abuse prevention campaign provided key child protection information, resources and advice to families and practitioners across Wales. As part of this delivery a [resource](#) to support the delivery of those messages was developed.

There was evidence on the need to develop further resources that could help parent/carers of children with protected characteristics to better understand the issues and keep their children safe. EYST (Ethnic Youth Support Team), Learning Disability Cymru and Stonewall Cymru were commissioned to work with Stop it Now Cymru to develop additional resources. Working in consultation with parent/carers and practitioners a set of resources were developed and published in 2021 for:

- Parent/carers with a LGBTQ+ child
- Parent/carers with a learning disability
- Easy Read version
- Parent/carers of a children with learning disability
- Ethnic minority parent/carers

Resources are available in 12 languages in addition to Welsh and English
[Resources - Stop It Now.](#)

These resources have been promoted via safeguarding partner networks and were showcased at a national digital conference in November 2021, with over 400 delegates.

Stop it Now Wales also deliver the Parents Protect learning programme through a Welsh Government Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant funding has been extended to 2025 to continue this work. This [12-part child sexual abuse learning programme](#) aims to answer questions and give adults the information, advice and support to help them

- understand potential risks
- recognise the warnings signs of abuse in children and adults
- build the confidence to prevent abuse
- realise why children don't talk about abuse

- know where they can go for support if they have concerns

Stop it Now Wales are now working with Learning Disability Wales to develop accessible Easy Read versions of these films, which will also have a British Sign Language interpreter on screen.

Stop it Now Wales also deliver an 'Early Intervention Programme' project funded through the Sustainable Social Service. This provides two types of early intervention for vulnerable or at-risk families in Wales. One for small groups of parents and the second for vulnerable or at-risk families. [Helping parents and carers - Stop It Now](#)

Action 9

There is legislation in place in Wales that requires public bodies to safeguard people from harm. Where services are commissioned by public bodies there are contractual requirements to have safeguarding arrangements in place. However, not every individual, group or organisation will have access to support to operate safely in this way. Some may not realise how important it is to have safeguarding arrangements in place and some may not know where to go for advice and support.

The **Welsh Government** published [Working together to safeguard people: code of safeguarding practice | GOV.WALES](#) in January 2022. Information for people enjoying activities or using services and their parents/carers has also been published.

This advice has been promoted by the Safeguarding Children Boards and through relevant networks for faith groups, sports groups, the voluntary sector etc.

Action 10

The Welsh Government published [Peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour | GOV.WALES](#) guidance in 2020. The NSPCC and Barnardo's Cymru were commissioned to work with Welsh Government to develop this advice. The guidance provides education settings with practical tools to prevent and respond to instances of peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour taking place both inside and out of the settings. This includes digital abuse and exploitation. Education settings should use this guidance to put in place clear policies to prevent and respond to instances of peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour, so that all children who attend their setting can realise their right to be safe and their right to an education.

Action 11

Children who are sexually exploited and children with harmful sexual behaviour need the support of their parents/carers. Parents and carers have reported through research and consultation that they struggle to understand what is happening to their child, what intervention will look like and how they can support their child.

The **Welsh Government** commissioned Barnardo's Cymru to develop two guides for parent/carers and these have been published and promoted with safeguarding partners:

[Harmful Sexual Behaviour - Parent's guide.pdf \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

[A Guide for Parents and Carers Providing Care, Support and Protection to children at risk of or who have been harmed by CSE.pdf \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

For practitioners Dr Sophie Hallett, Cardiff University was commissioned by **Welsh Government** to develop online learning sessions and resources on safeguarding young people from CSE and related safeguarding issues such as CCE, trafficking and going missing. These were published in 2021.

[Check Your Thinking – Resources to support safeguarding practice with young people, for use by all those working with and caring for young people.](#)

The Welsh Government also commissioned Barnardo's Cymru to develop advice and an online learning session for practitioners in relation to evidence-based practice with children with harmful sexual behaviour.

[WG - Harmful Sexual Behaviour - PROFESSIONAL GUIDE \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

[Better Futures Cymru – Preventing and responding to CSA | Barnardo's - YouTube](#)

Action 12

Many resources have been developed because of actions under the Plan. There are also useful resources available from specialist organisations that were not developed because of the Plan. However, unless practitioners are aware that these resources are available to support their own practice and to share with families, they will have limited impact.

The **Safeguarding Children Boards** all reported that they have promoted resources developed under the Plan through regional networks. This included cascade communications, e-bulletins, newsletters and via sector specific networks. Three of the six Safeguarding Children Boards have a Child Sexual Abuse section on their websites and one more reported that they are developing a specific section on their website.

CYSUR (Mid and West Wales) Safeguarding Children Board

Dyfed Powys Police have shared and distributed Welsh Government “Stop it Now” resources to officers who respond to parents/carers from Black and ethnic minority communities, parent/carers with disabled children and parent/carers with LGBT+ children and practitioners to understand CSA and how they can help to keep children safe.

Action 13

Practitioners have told us that child sexual abuse is an area of practice where they can lack confidence. Learning offers are vital to equip everyone working with children and young people to be able to identify risk of, understand and respond to child sexual abuse, including child sexual exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour.

All the **Safeguarding Children Boards** reported a wide range of activity in facilitating and promoting learning offers across their respective regions.

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Safeguarding Children Board was a pilot area for the training provided by the CSA Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse training package. This training was very well received and was rolled out over several sessions on a multi-agency basis. It has also been followed up by several further training sessions by individual agencies to ensure that the learning from the course is disseminated across all sectors. The region now has 'practice leads' in all statutory constituent agencies who after completing this training have the knowledge, skills, and experience to promote their expertise amongst colleagues. It is hoped that this approach will encourage practitioners to seek advice and guidance from their practice leads and be able to recognise and deal with cases of CSA with more confidence.

CYSUR (Mid and West Wales) Safeguarding Children Board report that a bespoke safeguarding training programme has been developed by the Junior Safeguardians for young people aged 11-25, in Pembrokeshire it is an interactive online training resource with facilitators script and supporting materials. This training covers healthy relationships, consent, and child sexual abuse. The training is free to access and has been promoted to all schools and education staff.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board report that Welsh Government commissioned training on implementation of statutory guidance on safeguarding children from CSE and evidence-based practice was delivered by Dr Sophie Hallett, Cardiff University via two regional online sessions. During National Safeguarding Week 2021 Safeguarding Week, New Pathways delivered a session for practitioners on 'Dealing with Disclosures of Child Sexual Abuse'

Gwent Safeguarding Children Board developed and disseminated a 3-part 'Bitesize' learning initiative introducing and promoting use of three Child Sexual Abuse Practitioner Resources, recently developed by The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse. The three Practitioner Resources cover the following themed areas: 1) Identifying concerns 2) Responding to Concerns 3) Supporting Families.

North Wales Safeguarding Children Board invited Dr Sophie Hallett, Cardiff University to review of the key findings from the IICSA report on child sexual exploitation by organised networks. A workshop highlighted the key findings from the IICSA report, considered both the research in Wales and the wider research in the UK, to consider how we can respond to the learning. This event was for Multi-Agency Practitioners across North Wales.

West Glamorgan Safeguarding Children Board commissioned training from the Stop it Now Wales /The Lucy Faithfull Foundation. The training sessions covered - Understanding child sexual abusers and promoting positive pathways for young people who have exhibited harmful sexual behaviour. Swansea local authority has set up working groups that look at diversity issues and how exploitation affects people with protected characteristics such as LGBTQ+, people with disabilities and Black and ethnic minority people.

Looking forward

The Welsh Government has commissioned several organisations to develop resources and learning offers to raise awareness for parent/carers, practitioners, and the public of how to help keep children safe from CSA because of the National Action Plan.

There are a wide range of resources and open access learning offers in place.

The Safeguarding Children Boards have all demonstrated strong delivery on these actions. Creating opportunities to promote resources and engaging with specialist organisations to provide training.

This work must continue. Workforce turnover means that there will also be new practitioners who require support with understanding and responding to child sexual abuse. Work to make parent/carers aware of the available resources must also continue, Safeguarding Children Boards have a central role here and practitioners have a role in sharing resources with the families they work with.

Objective 4: Increased awareness of how corporate safeguarding can contribute to the prevention of CSA

Corporate safeguarding has a core role in ensuring that adequate measures are in place to keep children safe. Corporate safeguarding is also important in preventing institutional child sexual abuse.

Neighbourhoods have been identified as sites in which young people can experience and/or be safeguarded from abuse and violence. While agencies already work to keep young people safe outside of the home, such as neighbourhood safety and the police, the primary focus of this work is crime prevention as opposed to child well-being and safeguarding.

Actions 14 and 15

The **Welsh Government** commissioned Practice Solutions working in partnership with Children in Wales to develop guidance on corporate safeguarding for local authorities. This work was supported by a multi-agency advisory group including the WLGA (Welsh Local Government Association) who published [Corporate Safeguarding Good Practice Guidance](#) in May 2022.

This work was completed later than planned because of the pandemic. This meant that **Safeguarding Children Boards** and their partners had a limited period to review their policies against the good practice guide. However, all **Safeguarding Children Boards** reported that the guide has been disseminated across the region and that further work will be undertaken to consider the advice.

CYSUR (Mid and West Wales) Safeguarding Children Board

A promotion event took place in National Safeguarding Week, November 2022, to promote awareness of the guidance for teams and services who sit outside of core safeguarding services such as youth teams, housing, and licensing departments etc.

Action 16

The Welsh Government has issued a position paper on the use of contextual safeguarding as a practice approach outside the approach set out in statutory guidance on safeguarding children from child sexual exploitation.

This action for **Safeguarding Children Boards** was interpreted in different ways by different Boards. The action was on piloting a Neighbourhood Assessment Toolkit approach, which has been developed by the Contextual Safeguarding Network.

North Wales Safeguarding Board reported that North Wales Police (with partner contributions) have produced very good Community Profiles in the recent period.

This action was also intended to support the use of contextual safeguarding as a tool to create safer spaces and places for children and young people in their communities.

Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Safeguarding Children Board

The Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitation (SAFE) team in Cardiff are undertaking a locality assessment. The aim of the assessment is to explore and compare the experiences of children and young people living in different localities across Cardiff, and to understand more about what factors within their neighbourhood and community could protect against exploitation or contribute to the risk of exploitation. The results from each locality assessment will be presented on a one-page profile to the SAFE Partnership Group. The profile will outline what is working well in the locality, what the concerns are in that locality and what might help safeguard children from exploitation in that locality. The Partnership Group will then make decisions on what needs to happen to address any issues in the locality and set actions going forward.

Looking forward

A corporate safeguarding guide is now in place and although Safeguarding Child Boards had limited time to bring this to the attention of partners in order that they review their own policies against it, this work has started. The involvement of the WLGA in developing, publishing, and hosting the guide will assist in making public bodies aware of the advice.

While each region has in some way considered learning from Contextual Safeguarding, further work to consider community/neighbourhood assessments should be a consideration of regional partnerships that consider child sexual exploitation and related issues of child criminal exploitation, children going missing and child trafficking. The establishment of such regional partnerships are a requirement of statutory guidance [Safeguarding children from child sexual exploitation | GOV.WALES](#)

Arrangements for the PROTECTION of children at risk of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

One of the difficulties in estimating the prevalence of CSA is that so much sexual abuse remains unidentified. Practitioners and other responsible adults need to be able to spot the signs of possible abuse and take appropriate action. The reasons children keep silent include fear of their abuser, not wanting their abuser to get into trouble, feeling that the abuse was 'their fault', and feeling responsible for what will happen to their family if they tell. Supporting a better understanding of CSA for children, non-abusing parent/carers and practitioners will support increased identification and disclosure so that children can be protected at the earliest opportunity.

Objective 5: Increased awareness in children of safe ways to disclose sexual abuse or risk of sexual abuse and of what should happen when they tell

Action 17, Action 18, Action 19, Action 20

The **Welsh Government** has developed and promoted resources for schools to support children and young people to 'speak out'. There are three posters, one for primary school children, one for secondary school children and young people and one for school staff. These have been promoted via the Safeguarding Education Group, a network of local authority Education Safeguarding Leads. [Repository - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales)

All **Safeguarding Children Boards** have reported activity to provide information to children through schools and education settings.

CYSUR (Mid and West Wales) Safeguarding Children Board

Children attending school engage in a programme of work in respect of appropriate relationships both within the family and outside of the family. During this programme, resources are included on children speaking out about abuse.

- Primary Schools receive sessions delivered by NSPCC, such as 'Speak out Stay Safe'.
- An array of posters situated around Schools, highlighting support services such as MEIC, Childline, NSPCC etc.
- Circle Time and use of emoji for Primary School aged children, to allow for disclosures.
- Use of ELSA's within Schools and School Counselling Service, to allow for safe environments for disclosures.
- School Beat Officers delivering sessions such as 'Consent' to highlight abuse.
- Wellbeing questionnaires.

The **Welsh Government** commissioned Childline/NSPCC to develop information for children and young people on speaking out and getting help. One for children under 12 years old and one for children over 12 years old.

[Getting Help To Keep Safe \(u12\) | Childline](#)

[Getting help to keep safe | Childline](#)

All **Safeguarding Children Boards** have reported activity to promote resources and provide information to children.



The Welsh Government commissioned Dr Sophie Hallett, Cardiff University to develop online learning sessions and resources on safeguarding young people from CSE and related safeguarding issues such as CCE, trafficking and going missing. This work also included an animation about support for children.

[Materials for Young People – Check Your Thinking](#)

All the **Safeguarding Children Boards** reported that they have promoted information for children on speaking out and what will happen if they do.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board has tagged services, organisation and groups that work with children and families in social media social media posts on information and links to resources on CSA, CSE, HSB and Online Abuse. Contacting the voluntary organisations within each local authority area of Cwm Taf Morgannwg to request that they send information and resources on CSA, CSE, HSB and Online Abuse, to those groups within their networks that work with children and families so that the resources can be shared.

West Glamorgan Safeguarding Children Board report that the resources have been disseminated through networks. Training has also been provided on Dealing with disclosures of sexual violence. All schools promote safe people and safe places for pupils to go if they are worried or have concerns.

Looking forward

Several resources for children have been developed and made available through actions under the Plan and all Safeguarding Boards have worked to promote information for children about speaking out and getting help through their networks, with a particular focus on schools and colleges. However, in the next phase of work

the Welsh Government will consider what more can be done to make sure that information for children is shared in the places and spaces they use, including online social media platforms. This will include thinking about the best ways to share this information and what new resources might be needed.

Objective 6: Increased awareness in non-abusing parent/carers of what should happen if a child is sexually abused, of how to support children and of how to access support for themselves

Action 21 and Action 22

There is very little research on the impact of CSA on non-abusing parents but what evidence there is suggests that non-abusing parents/carers need access to information about the processes surrounding the investigation of CSA; advice on how to support their child(ren) and support with the emotional impact that CSA has on the child and family.

The **Welsh Government** commissioned Stop it Now Wales/the Lucy Faithfull Foundation to develop information for non-abusing parent/carers. The organisation worked in consultation with parent/carers, practitioners, and adult survivors to develop the advice.



The Guide includes Practical information about what will happen if there is an investigation about their child being sexually abused. [Download leaflet](#)

All the **Safeguarding Boards** reported that they have promoted information for non-abusing parent/carers across safeguarding networks in their region. This includes the Stop it Now Wales Leaflet and some Boards also reported sharing resources from the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse [Supporting Parents and Carers Guide - CSA Centre](#) . These resources' part funded by the Welsh Government.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board reports that hard copies of this document have been requested for the South Wales Police who have asked for these so that they can be shared with parents whose children may be involved in sexual abuse investigations.

Looking forward

All the Safeguarding Boards have promoted information for non-abusing parents. There is a need to consider how to best achieve the routine sharing of this information. The example from Cwm Taf Morgannwg of the production of hard copies for the Police could usefully be replicated across other police force areas.

Objective 7: Practitioners have access to resources and training to equip them to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to children at risk of or abused through CSA

Action 23 and Action 24

Practitioners need knowledge of the evidenced approaches to supporting sexually abused children to promote their recovery and well-being and of support for non-abusing members of family and carers supporting sexually abused children through recovery. The **Welsh Government** part funded a programme of work undertaken by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse to produce resources and online learning sessions for practitioners working across agencies.

[Supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse - CSA Centre](#)

[Supporting Parents and Carers Guide - CSA Centre](#)

[Communicating with Children Guide - CSA Centre](#)

[Signs & Indicators Template - CSA Centre](#)

Safeguarding Children Boards have all evidenced opportunities and take up of practitioner learning on handling disclosures of abuse, the investigation process and supporting families affected by CSA and promotion of the Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse resources and online learning.

Looking forward

The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse and Stop it Now Wales/ the Lucy Faithfull Foundation have played a key role in supporting the Safeguarding Children Boards through workshops and training to support learning and promote practitioner resources. However, this work is still an area of practice where services and practitioners are building confidence. The Welsh Government will consider how learning in this area of practice can be sustained and the role of Safeguarding Children Boards in supporting this.

A new *All Wales Practice Guide on safeguarding children from child sexual abuse* includes links to the practice resources developed under the Plan. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board is currently considering a final draft of the *All-Wales Practice Guide on safeguarding children from child sexual abuse* for publication with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. All Wales Practice Guides on safeguarding children from child sexual exploitation (CSE) and children where there are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) are already available. [Social care Wales \(safeguarding.wales\)](https://socialcare.wales/safeguarding.wales)

Cardiff and the Vale Safeguarding Children Board promoted emerging learning from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse to practitioners across the region and a 7-minute briefing on sexual abuse made available to staff.

CYSUR (Mid and West Wales) Safeguarding Children Board report that higher tier specialist safeguarding training is available for practitioners across the four LA's that would cover this requirement. In addition to this, training has been provided to practitioners across the region by the national Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse that supports this.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board reported that practitioners attended the Welsh Government online learning event 'The Right to be Safe- preventing and responding to child sexual abuse and exploitation in Wales'. The Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse also delivered a workshop in the region.

Gwent Safeguarding Children Board held three one-day multi-agency training sessions on intra-familial child sexual abuse facilitated by the Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse. The training will support practitioners to improve their understanding of child sexual abuse within the family environment and help them to better identify signs and indicators and respond effectively to protect children. The Board intends to re-commission these training events into the forthcoming year.

North Wales Safeguarding Children Board in response to the Action Plan commissioned more Joint Investigation Training and Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) training, via North Wales Police. The Joint Investigation training has taken place virtually on a rolling basis. The training is funded by the NWSB To meet demand 3 further ABE sessions are being held currently in the region.

West Glamorgan Safeguarding Children Board commissioned training through Stop it Now Wales/the Lucy Faithfull foundation and the Centre for Expertise on child sexual abuse has also delivered training for practitioners in the region.

Arrangements for the SUPPORT of children who are sexually abused

CSA, CSE, HSB and Online CSA can and does impact negatively on the well-being outcomes of children well into adulthood. Our responses to children must include

evidence-based support likely to support recovery for the trauma associated with abuse, build resilience and secure longer-term improvements in their well-being.

Objective 8: Evidence on the prevalence of CSA is collated to inform the planning of services for children who have been sexually abused

Action 25 and Action 26

The main source of evidence on the prevalence of CSA is currently the Child Protection Register but we know that CSA is underreported. At the same time the share of children on a protection plan for sexual abuse in Wales has decreased over the past two decades. The Child Protection Register commonly serves as the main source of evidence in decision making for setting priorities, resource allocation and training.

The **Welsh Government** part funded research led by the Centre for Expertise of Child Sexual Abuse *Exploring the scale of CSA in social care records: Wales File Study* [Gaining insights from practice - CSA Centre](#). The research highlighted several areas of learning in relation to the identification and recording of child sexual abuse. These informed the further work of the Centre for Expertise of Child Sexual Abuse in developing resources and online learning sessions to improve practice.

Five of the six Safeguarding Children Boards reported action on considering the research findings, West Glamorgan Safeguarding Children Board reported that they will wait for the final Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse before deciding on action

Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Safeguarding Children Board reported that the Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse delivered a workshop on 'Using evidence to inform service planning for children who have experienced sexual abuse'. As a result, Board members agreed that a review of the recent work on drafting a Performance Framework would need to consider the type of data provided at this workshop, ensuring the Board were sighted on this information and in particular, the trends.

CYSUR (Mid and West Wales) Safeguarding Children Board organised a regional event delivered by the Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse attended by senior multi-agency strategic leads in June 2022. Powys had the highest recognition of sexual abuse in Child Protection Register registrations in Wales in 2021. This is a positive example of ensuring that when a case comes to conference, sexual abuse is named and recognised – dual categories are supporting this recognition. Significant work has been undertaken in 2021 to further develop Powys data set on Child Sexual Exploitation. This data set is presented at each MACE. Further work has been undertaken with Llamau to support their data reporting. This work is being used to inform good practice more widely across the region.

Gwent Safeguarding Children Board reported that the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse delivered a workshop relating to child sexual abuse and shared current data in relation to the region with Board members which prompted a further action to ensure that the Board continue to prioritise child sexual abuse beyond the conclusion of the National Action Plan for Preventing and Responding to CSA. The Gwent Safeguarding Board have agreed to ensure that this work will continue beyond June 2022 and into the next period, via a dedicated working group to consider several actions including training review, an audit of cases to inform learning, potential adoption of the signs and indicator tool within the Gwent region.

North Wales Safeguarding Children Board reported that the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse presented to the Board on the exploring the scale of CSA in social care records research. In response to the presentation, the Board are reviewing its workforce and training programs to ensure key training is available and audit work program going forward.

Looking forward

Five of the six Safeguarding Children Boards are already progressing work on systems and approaches to capturing evidence on the prevalence of child sexual abuse in their regions, West Glamorgan Safeguarding Children Board intend to consider this issue after the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse final recommendations. A good practice example has been put forward in relation to Powys that can inform other areas.

The new *All Wales Practice Guide on safeguarding children from child sexual abuse* once agreed by the Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board includes a link to the [Signs & Indicators Template - CSA Centre](#) from the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse. This practice tool will be useful in improving the identification of child sexual abuse. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board has also established a working group to develop a practice tool to support the identification of child sexual exploitation (CSE). The Welsh Government will consider the best way to monitor the impact of these practice tool in improving identification of and evidence about the prevalence of child sexual abuse as part of the next phase of work.

The Welsh Government has worked with stakeholders to develop a Performance and Improvement Framework for Social Services to help local authorities measure

and improve the performance of their social services, this includes monitoring data on children at risk of abuse, neglect to harm [Social services performance measures for local authorities | GOV.WALES](#)

Objective 9: Children who have been sexually abused, sexually abused through CSE and/or have HSB have access to trauma-informed services and appropriate therapeutic support based on their individual care and support needs to improve well-being and prevent repeat abuse

Where a child discloses an incident(s) of child sexual abuse or where there is evidence to suggest that they have been sexually abused they should be referred to a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). A SARC is a dedicated facility to provide immediate and ongoing client care, including medical, practical, and emotional support within the context of a partnership arrangement between police, health and the third sector. Child sexual abuse causes trauma and children will benefit from trauma-informed services and appropriate therapeutic support to help them into recovery.

Action 27 and Action 28

The Welsh Sexual Assault Services Programme is an improvement project led by the NHS Wales Health Collaborative working with Health, Police, Police Crime Commissioners and in partnership with the specialist third sector. The programme is driving delivery of child/person centred services to ensure the best outcomes for victims of sexual abuse and violence, with the victim voice at the centre. Health boards, police forces, Police and Crime Commissioners, in partnership with the third sector, have agreed a service model for the delivery of sexual assault referral services in South Wales, Dyfed Powys and Gwent. North Wales has also joined the programme to ensure that there is parity of service provision across Wales and is looking at the design of their services. The hub and spoke model will provide a more integrated service that is driven by the needs of victims and patients and supports the provision of services that meet clinical, forensic, quality and safety standards and guidance, and ensures robust governance arrangements.

There is agreement in place as part of the Wales Sexual Assault Services Programme in terms of the services that are provided by Sexual Assault Referral Centres in Wales. There are robust, collaborative working arrangements in place to ensure a multi-agency response to victims of sexual abuse – with the ultimate aim of improving health outcomes for victims and survivors of sexual assault.

There is currently a clinical pathway in place for child sexual abuse and the Wales Sexual Assault Services Programme has been considering this. All partners have agreed and are working towards a new, more integrated service delivery model for SARCs for both adults and children and young people – with the new model based on a regional approach with Hubs in Cardiff, Swansea, and Aberystwyth, with an integrated service also being provided in North Wales.

Action 29

[Traumatic Stress Wales](#) and the Sexual Assault Referral Services Programme are both considering trauma-informed services and appropriate therapeutic support for children who have been abused through child sexual abuse. Traumatic Stress Wales is funded by Welsh Government (£1.2million annually) and aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people of all ages living in Wales at risk of developing or with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD). The initiative covers children, young people, and adults, and is co-produced, co-owned and co-delivered by all relevant stakeholders, including people with lived experience of PTSD and CPTSD. A key focus of their work is to improve access to effective and evidence-based therapies for people who have experienced traumatic events – supported through research and quality improvement work to address gaps in knowledge, capacity, and capability. Education and training, research and development, clinical audit and improvement methodology are being used to drive a continuously learning and increasingly effective system.

Traumatic Stress Wales have several different workstreams, focussing on sexual assault, criminal justice, forced migrants, perinatal, adults, young people, and assessment and outcomes.

The Sexual Assault Workstream is an all-Wales group, comprised of people who provide and work within Sexual Assault Referral Centres, along with other services that provide care and support to people who have experienced sexual trauma. The aim of the group is to develop effective trauma care pathways across all health and third sector providers, that are joined up and integrated across services. They are doing this by working in partnership across health services, voluntary organisations, and statutory services. They are developing competency frameworks that will support training initiatives for frontline staff as well as for the delivery of trauma therapies. The chair of the Sexual Assault Workstream is also the lead for the Welsh Sexual Assault Services Programme in the NHS Wales Health Collaborative.

The Welsh Sexual Assault Services Programme is an improvement project led by the NHS Wales Health Collaborative working with the health boards, police, Police Crime Commissioners and in partnership with the specialist third sector. The programme is driving delivery of child/person centred services to ensure the best outcomes for victims of sexual abuse and violence, with the victim voice at the centre. Health boards, police forces, Police and Crime Commissioners, in partnership with the third sector, have agreed a service model for the delivery of sexual assault referral services in South Wales, Dyfed Powys, Gwent and North Wales. The model will provide a more integrated service that is driven by the needs of victims and patients and supports the provision of services that meet clinical, forensic, quality and safety standards and guidance, and ensures robust governance arrangements.

Other developments in Wales are also supporting this objective – including the recent publication of the new [Trauma-Informed Wales Framework](#) – developed by Traumatic Stress Wales and the ACEs Hub. This all-society Framework aims to support a coherent, consistent approach to developing and implementing trauma-informed practice across Wales, providing the best possible support to those who need it most. Welsh Government are currently working with Traumatic Stress Wales and the ACE Support Hub to develop an implementation plan for the framework. This will consider the further work, and resources, required to support the roll out of the

framework, which could include additional work with services which support those who are victims of CSA to help them to work in trauma-informed ways.

Action 30

Barnardo's Cymru and Cardiff University were awarded a **Welsh Government** Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant to deliver the Gwella Project. The aim of the Gwella project was to reduce the risk of vulnerable children experiencing CSE or demonstrating HSB, through the development of a prevention model for use in social care, in order to improve the well-being of children. The practice approach was being piloted in several local authorities.

To promote learning from the project a successful Gwella Digital Conference was held in 2020, with over 600 delegates registering for the online event.

[The Gwella Approach evaluation - Research - Cardiff University](#)

Action 31

Four of the six **Safeguarding Children Boards** have already undertaken some work to review and map therapeutic support in their region. However only Gwent Safeguarding Children Board has completed this exercise. Two Safeguarding Child Boards reported that they will start this work this financial year.

Since the Plan was published the work of [Traumatic Stress Wales](#) has developed considerably. The [Sexual Assault](#) Workstream is an all-Wales group, comprised of people who work within Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), and within other services that provide care and support to people (children and adults) who have experienced sexual trauma. The aim of the group is to develop effective trauma care pathways across all health boards, which are joined up and integrated across services. The group are doing this by working in partnership across health services, voluntary organisations, and statutory services. They are developing competency frameworks that will support training initiatives for frontline staff as well as for the delivery of trauma therapies.

Gwent Safeguarding Children Board undertook a regional review of available therapeutic support and gaps in service. This will be revisited alongside an Office of Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner audit. The Board will revisit information that outlined therapeutic support delivered in Gwent and plan to approach Health Partners to work collaboratively on a response to any gaps identified.

Looking forward

The Wales Sexual Assault Referral Services Programme and Traumatic Stress Wales are both considering trauma-informed services and appropriate therapeutic support for children who have been abused through child sexual abuse. This work is on-going.

Mapping work being undertaken by Traumatic Stress Wales can usually inform the work of the Safeguarding Children Boards.

Welsh Government are also working with Traumatic Stress Wales and the ACE Support Hub to develop an implementation plan for the Trauma-Informed Wales Framework.

Objective 10: Children who have been sexually abused are given information about and appropriately referred into adult support services as they approach 18 years of age

Action 32 and Action 33

Adult survivors of CSA have told us about difficulties in accessing information about where to go to get advice and support about the impact of the experience on their well-being. Some survivors do not disclose until they are in adulthood, others are identified as victims of CSA in childhood but find that the trauma of that childhood experience impacts on them later in life.



The **Welsh Government** commissioned Welsh Women's Aid to develop a leaflet for children coming up to the age of 18 to remind them that help is available at any age. [Live fear free: here for you leaflet | GOV.WALES](#)

Welsh Government also provided funding to the NHS Wales Health Collaborative, Welsh Sexual Assault Services Programme Team to run a social media campaign including a powerful [film](#) and [animation](#) describing the services and support provided by sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) in Wales.



The **Safeguarding Children Boards** all reported activity to promote these resources.

Looking forward

Work to widely promote information for survivors of child sexual abuse needs to continue. A leaflet has been developed and can usefully be further promoted. The NHS Wales Health Collaborative, Welsh Sexual Assault Services Programme Team will continue to promote services.

Relevant policy contributing to the objectives of the Plan

When the Plan was published, we set out that it should be read in conjunction with plans and strategy on Violence Against Women, Sexual Violence and on enhancing digital resilience for children and young people online.

The Welsh Government is committed to tackling online sexual exploitation and abuse and our [‘Enhancing digital resilience in education action plan to protect children and young people online’](#) sets out our ongoing work with key partners to support children and young people to stay safe from harm online.

Through the [Keeping safe online](#) area on Hwb, we will continue to provide an extensive suite of online safety resources for education practitioners, schools, children and young people and their families. From autumn 2022, we will establish a Keeping safe online youth group to invite children and young people to share their online experiences and provide opinions and insights that will shape and inform our work in this area.

We are project partners in the Developing Resilience against Online Grooming Project, led by Swansea University, which includes the development of DRAGON-Shield, an interactive digital training platform and resource pack for professional working with children and young people.

Welsh Government has always been clear about its ambition to end violence against women and girls. Violence against women and girls is a societal problem which requires a societal response. We must challenge attitudes and change behaviours of those who behave abusively.

That is why the Welsh Government Programme for Government commits to strengthening the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy to include a focus on violence against women in the street and workplace as well as the home to make Wales the safest place in Europe to be a woman.

The Welsh Government published its five-year VAWDASV National Strategy in May 2022 which was developed alongside a group of key partner organisations including the police, specialist sector and survivors. [Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: strategy 2022 to 2026 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#).

A public consultation on a draft Strategy was held between 7 December and 7 February. Over 120 responses were received. In addition to organisational responses from across the public, private and the third sector, there were responses from individuals who are VAWDASV survivors or whose lives have been directly impacted by VAWDASV.

The Strategy sets out the overarching objectives that the Welsh Government will deliver in partnership with stakeholders to progress the purpose of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

The strategy will be delivered through a Blueprint approach, which brings together devolved and non-devolved organisations, as well as strengthening the partnership between public private and specialist sectors.

Overseeing the delivery of the Strategy is a new National Partnership Board – a Ministerial-led board co-chaired by PCC Dafydd Llywelyn, the lead Police and Crime Commissioner for Wales. Work on delivering the Strategy will be aligned with our Programme for Government, with workstreams for street harassment and safety in public places; workplace harassment; tackling perpetration; sustainable commissioning, children and young people and older people.

Hearing the views of survivors has been extremely important during the consultation and the survivor voice will continue to feed into the National Partnership Board and its workstreams through the development of a National Survivor Voice Scrutiny and Involvement Panel.

The Strategy adopts a life course approach to VAWDASV, inclusive of children and adults of all ages, recognising features of abuse throughout an individual's life stages.

We have been working with several partners to ensure the voices of children and young people during the consultation period. This included publishing a Young Person's version of the consultation document together with an online survey. These were used during engagement with children and young people by our partners in the specialist VAWDASV sector, as well as being promoted by the Children's Commissioner and Children in Wales.

Next steps

The Welsh Government is currently giving full consideration to the IICSA recommendations for Wales. We will also consider the areas for further action identified in this report.

The organisation, Children in Wales have been commissioned to lead a programme of engagement with stakeholders in early 2023. This will provide an opportunity for partners to provide feedback on areas already identified for action and to identify any further issues that should be considered for the next phase of work.

A draft implementation/action plan will then be developed by the Welsh Government. We will engage and consult with children with lived experience and with multi-agency stakeholders on the draft plan in June/July 2023. This will inform the publication of an implementation/action plan on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in Wales in the Autumn of 2023.

This does not mean that work on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse will cease up to the Autumn of 2023. In line with the statutory obligations set out in our legislation and guidance and explained in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, duties to protect children at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm, including child sexual abuse remain in place. Each of the regional Safeguarding Children Boards has also agreed to continue and build on the work initiated under the National Action Plan on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse (2019-2022).

ANNEX

Actions delivered under the National Action Plan on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse between 31 July 2019 and 30 June 2022

Action	Owner
A1 -Develop a public awareness campaign to promote attitudes to CSA that will contribute to the prevention of abuse.	Welsh Government
A2- Promote the public awareness campaign in each region across Wales.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A3. Issue Relationships and Sexuality Education in Schools Guidance	Welsh Government
A4. Develop poster campaign on unsafe and unhealthy relationships for children and parent/carers	Welsh Government
A5. Promote information to children and parent/carers on healthy/unhealthy relationships	Safeguarding Board partners.
A6. Develop a clear referral pathway for children who display inappropriate sexualised behaviour to receive an early help assessment as recommended in NICE guidance 2016.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A7. Develop resources to support parents/carers from BAME communities, parent/carers with disabled children and parent/carers with LGBT+ children and practitioners to understand CSA and how they can help to keep children safe.	Welsh Government
A8. Promote resources to support parents/carers from BAME communities, parent/carers with disabled children and parent/carers with LGBT+ children and practitioners to understand CSA in the context of equality and diversity issues and how they can help to keep their children safe through an awareness raising campaign and learning sessions.	Welsh Government
A9. Develop and consult on a voluntary safeguarding code of practice for out-of-school settings and accompanying guidance for parents.	Welsh Government
A10. Develop non-statutory practice guidance to support those working in education settings, in managing cases of peer-on-peer abuse within the education settings The guidance will provide advice on ensuring that where there are concerns around HSB children can continue to receive an education in way which is safe for them and for other learners.	Welsh Government
A11. Develop information resources for practitioners and for parent/carers on CSE and HSB.	Welsh Government
A12. Promote information and resources on CSA, CSE, HSB and Online abuse to practitioners working with	Safeguarding Board partners.

children and their families including information that practitioners can share with children and their families.	
A13. Support practitioner learning on CSA, CSE, HSB and Online Abuse including awareness of relevant guidance, procedures and practice guides. This should include promoting an understanding of CSA in the context of equality and diversity issues such as gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A14. Develop an exemplar corporate safeguarding policy in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) for consideration by Safeguarding Board Partners.	Welsh Government
A15. Consider adoption of exemplar corporate safeguarding policy.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A16. Consider learning from the Contextual Safeguarding Network on neighbourhoods and consider a regional pilot site for the Neighbourhood Assessment toolkit.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A17. Promote resources for schools with information for children on safe ways to speak out about abuse.	Welsh Government
A18. Promote resources with information for children on safe ways to speak out about abuse.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A19. Develop resources for children on what will happen if they tell an adult they are being abused.	Welsh Government
A20. Promote resources for children on what will happen if they tell an adult they are being abused.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A21. Develop resources for non-abusing parent/carers on the process related to the investigation of CSA, CSE and HSB on the best ways to support children and on sources of help and support for non-abusing parent/carers.	Welsh Government
A22. Promote resources for non-abusing parent/carers on the process related to the investigation of CSA, CSE and HSB, on the best ways to support children and on sources of help and support for non-abusing parent/carers.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A23. Develop training resources on handling disclosures of CSA, the investigation process and supporting families affected by CSA for practitioners.	Welsh Government
A24. Support practitioner learning on handling disclosures of abuse, the investigation process and supporting families affected by CSA for practitioners.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A25. Part-fund Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse research: Exploring the scale of CSA in social care records: Wales File Study	Welsh Government
A26. Consider the implications of the findings of the research Exploring the scale of CSA in social care records: Wales File Study in reviewing the likely prevalence of CSA in the region.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A27. Support the development of a national Service Specification for Sexual Assault Referral Centre services	Welsh Government

in Wales with the NHS Wales Health Collaborative taking into consideration a range of child-centred practice models.	
A28. Support the development and consult on a clinical pathway for children who have disclosed CSA/ children where CSA has been identified with the NHS Wales Health Collaborative.	Welsh Government
A29. Support the evidence-based development of the therapeutic support offer to children affected by trauma related to CSA.	Welsh Government
A30. Promote evidence and learning from the Welsh Government funded Gwella project	Welsh Government
A31. Undertake a review of available therapeutic support for children who have experienced CSA, CSE, HSB or Online sexual abuse in the region, so that gaps in provision can be identified and addressed.	Safeguarding Board partners.
A32. Develop age-appropriate resources for children coming up to the age of 18 years on accessing support as adult survivors of abuse.	Welsh Government
A33. Promote resources for children coming up to the age of 18 years on accessing support as adult survivors of abuse.	Safeguarding Board partners.