

Strengthening Services for Victims and Survivors: Programme briefing for policy- makers, funders and commissioners

June 2022

Introduction

In May 2022, the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre) launched its new Strengthening Services for Victims and Survivors Programme. At its heart, this programme aims to enable children, young people and adults who have been victims of child sexual abuse and their families to access services that promote safety and encourage healing and recovery.

The programme's key aims are:

To increase the strength and resilience of services supporting victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and their families

To support national government, funders and commissioners to commission services effectively on the basis of a better knowledge of need

To help service provision keep pace with the needs of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and their families.

To work towards these aims, we will be delivering four strands of activity with each one producing a number of key outputs.

Strand 1: Mapping service provision and gaps	<p>Key outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of the Sector reports (2023 and 2025) • Online database/map of services (2023)
Strand 2: Supporting service provision	<p>Key outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct support to services in responding to needs • Workshops on key topics • Sector events to share and learn
Strand 3: Supporting effective funding and commissioning	<p>Key outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of funding for the sector • Briefing for services • Workshops with policy-makers, funders and commissioners • Framework setting out what services funders and commissioners should expect to fund in their area
Strand 4: Building understanding	<p>Key outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Messages from Research on impact of child sexual abuse • Plan for future research to investigate experiences of children/young people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds who have been sexually abused

Why we hope you will get involved

Those who fund support services for victims, survivors and their families play a key role in shaping support for people affected by child sexual abuse. They require good knowledge of the range and complexity of issues that people face, as well as access to high-quality evidence about effective practice in order to inform their decision-making.

We want the Strengthening Services for Victims and Survivors Programme to make a difference to those who fund and commission support services for victims, survivors and their families.

By producing State of the Sector reports which show what support is actually available for victims, survivors and their families, and where the gaps are, we hope to:

- **Shine a light on the availability** – and lack of availability – of support for victims, survivors and their families.
- **Demonstrate the need** for support services for victims, survivors and their families.
- **Highlight the challenges** faced by those providing support services for victims, survivors and their families.

Through providing direct support to services, as well as producing resources and organising events, we hope to:

- **Help organisations to better evidence the value** of the support they provide for victims, survivors and their families.
- **Enhance their ability to understand and respond to need**, for example in responding to different forms of abuse or the diversity of victims, survivors and their families.
- **Share learning** with other organisations providing support to victims, survivors and their families and **encourage mutual support**.

By working with policy-makers, funders and commissioners, we hope to:

- **Increase understanding of the need for funding** for support services for victims, survivors and their families.
- **Improve the way funding is made available and managed** so that applying for funding and reporting back to funders/commissioners is more transparent and less onerous.
- **Increase the amount of funding available** to organisations so that they can sustain, expand and develop their services to meet the needs of victims, survivors and their families.

Finally, by developing an online resource showing services available for victims, survivors and their families, we hope to **improve access for victims, survivors and their families** to support that will meet their needs.

What we bring

The CSA Centre is in a unique position to deliver this programme. We are independent of government, yet closely listened to. We also have a team of researchers and practice experts who will be supporting this programme who will be working with services to focus the support we provide on the needs of the sector. We have also done some previous work in this space, including a series of studies carried out as part of our 'Understanding Effectiveness' programme of research:

- [Effectiveness of services for sexually abused children and young people, Report 1: A knowledge review](#)
- [Effectiveness of services for sexually abused children and young people, Report 2: A survey of service providers](#)
- [Effectiveness of services for sexually abused children and young people, Report 3: Perspectives of service users with learning difficulties or experience of care](#)

In addition, between October 2017 and March 2018, we funded 17 providers of services in England and Wales to improve their capacity to assess and evidence their services' effectiveness as part of our Evaluation Fund. Following this programme of work, we published learning from this ([The CSA Centre's Evaluation Fund: A reflection](#)) as well as some resources to support services with measuring their effectiveness:

- [Measuring your effectiveness: A practical guide for services working with children and young people affected by sexual abuse](#)
- [An introduction to Theory of Change.](#)

Who this programme is for

Our Strengthening Services for Victims and Survivors Programme is for any organisation in England and Wales that provides specialist support services for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and their families – and for the policy-makers, funders and commissioners who fund these services. This includes funding for services for:

- children and young people who have been sexually abused by adults or by other young people
- children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation
- adult survivors of child sexual abuse
- family members of children who have been sexually abused

The programme is not focusing on services which:

- focus on the prevention of child sexual abuse (e.g. education programmes, outreach programmes, campaigns)
- respond to those who have sexually harmed a child or fear they may sexually harm a child
- charge service users for the intervention (e.g. private therapy/counselling)

- support children, young people or adults with issues affecting their wellbeing, with support related to sexual abuse provided as part of this.
- only provide medical assessment/intervention without any additional therapeutic/wellbeing support.

How to get involved

We will be launching the Strengthening Services for Victims and Survivors Programme through a series of consultation events, open to anyone interested in this work to hear our plans and share their thoughts:

Our consultation event for policy-makers, funders and commissioners is on 12th July from 2.30 – 3.30pm. Please register [here](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ssvsmailing) (www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ssvsmailing).

We would also like to invite you to join the Strengthening Services for Victims and Survivors Programme mailing list so that you can be kept in touch with programme news:

Register to join our mailing list: ssvs@csacentre.org.uk