

Centre of  
expertise  
on child  
sexual abuse



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Part Funded by  
**Welsh Government**

# Uncovering the scale of child sexual abuse in social care records

## Request for proposals

Deadline for receipt of proposals: 5pm, Monday 19 November 2018

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# 1. About the CSA Centre

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre) aims to create a future where children are free from the threat and harm of sexual abuse, by radically improving how we prevent and respond to the issue through really understanding its causes, scope, scale and impact. Funded by the Home Office and hosted by Barnardo's, we are independent and will challenge any barriers, assumptions, taboos and ways of working that prevent us from increasing our understanding and improving our approach to tackling child sexual abuse (CSA).

The CSA Centre operates across England and Wales. This study is carried out in Wales and is developed and funded in collaboration with the Welsh Government.

## 2. Project overview

A key aim for the CSA Centre is to increase understanding and awareness of the scale and changing nature of CSA. In a [scoping review](#) published in July 2017, we noted that the number of children on the Welsh child protection register for sexual abuse, as a proportion of the total number of children on the register, decreased from 21% in 1993/94 to 4% in 2016/17 (and a similar fall took place in England). There is a professional consensus in Wales that the child protection register figures are not an accurate reflection of the actual incidence of CSA dealt with by local authorities, and the decline in those figures is not borne out by a rise in CSA crimes recorded by the police. Our review also noted substantial regional variation across local authorities in rates of identification of CSA, and recommended further research to explore the reasons for this.

Without more accurate figures, it is difficult to respond to sexual abuse and to develop and commission services that meet victims' needs. Offering children the right support when there are concerns about sexual abuse or sexually harmful behaviour is likely to mediate risks to longer-term mental health and other difficulties, so it is important to identify how social services are responding to CSA concern.

### Research aims

This study aims to explore the presence of concerns relating to the actual or potential sexual abuse of children who are not on the child protection register for sexual abuse but who are assessed by or receive services from social care teams (from early help to looked-after teams). We want to explore both the scale of identified CSA concerns in a sample of these children and the service response – the support that these children receive in relation to the actual or potential CSA.

We also want to understand the extent of CSA concerns relating to children who are on the child protection register under other abuse categories (emotional, physical or neglect), and to explore why those children have not been recorded on the register under sexual abuse.

Additionally, the study will look at a snapshot of cases referred to social care specifically because of CSA concerns, and will record the outcomes of those referrals

(and, in cases where no further action was taken, explore the reasons for taking no action).

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- How does practice and recording of CSA differ in two local authority areas in Wales?
- Among a sample of children receiving support from social care teams, in how many cases have CSA concerns been identified? If CSA is identified as a concern but is not a primary concern, what intervention do children receive for CSA?
- What proportion of children for whom CSA concerns have been raised are 'hidden' under other categories of abuse (neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse) on the child protection register? Do these children recorded under other categories of abuse receive any intervention for CSA?
- What are the reasons for recording children under other categories of abuse on the register, when CSA has been highlighted as a concern?
- What happens to children who are referred to social services because of CSA concerns, if those concerns do not meet the thresholds for children to receive care and support?

The analysis will need to be written into a concise report, answering the research questions and drawing out implications for practice.

### Cost and timescales

We estimate that the study will involve 10–15 days of fieldwork in each local authority (20–30 days in total). The local authorities will be recruited by the CSA Centre and are likely to be in different areas of Wales. The fieldwork will need to be undertaken between **December 2018 and February 2019**. The report with recommendations will need to be drafted by the **end of March 2019**.

Cost provided for this research is **£12,240** inclusive of VAT.

## 3. Specification

The CSA Centre is seeking an individual or an organisation with relevant social care research experience to carry out a case file audit of a sample of children's files across different social care teams in two local authority areas in Wales. Most of the research will be undertaken using electronic social care files. Paper records need to be consulted only when electronic records refer to relevant information.

Bidders must be able to demonstrate:

- previous experience of conducting research using social care or other agency files and/or social care electronic systems
- an excellent knowledge of social work practice – it is essential that they understand how decisions are made, in order to navigate the information in files and make judgements about when to consult paper files
- experience of quantitative analysis and of developing tools to gather quantitative data

- excellent report-writing skills, and the ability to write to practitioner audiences drawing out implications for practice
- a thorough understanding of the principles of conducting ethical research and the General Data Protection Regulation
- up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance
- availability to spend 20–30 days in Wales during the specified fieldwork period.

The CSA Centre has a dedicated staff researcher to support this project, particularly in the development of data collection tools, and the CSA Centre will carry out supplementary qualitative research (interviews with local authority staff). The report on the research will be co-authored by the successful bidder and the CSA Centre's staff.

All CSA Centre reports undergo a rigorous review process before publication. We will collate and check all the reviewers' comments before sending them to the co-authors, who will need to be able to respond effectively and efficiently to the comments. This will need to be considered in the planning process and in timescales.

## 4. Contracting authority

The contracting authority is Barnardo's (Company Number: 61625), whose registered officer is Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG.

Barnardo's will be acting through the CSA Centre for this contract. There is a degree of separation between the two, which is essential for the CSA Centre's credibility and independence.

## 5. Proposal conditions

Information provided by the CSA Centre is provided in good faith and is believed to be correct at the time of publication.

Your proposal must demonstrate how the specifications are to be met; this should be done on the proposal form (attached as Appendix A), which should be submitted with a short CV and an example of succinct, accessible written work.

The CSA Centre may contact one or more referees to ensure that you are able to complete the work to our standards.

Proposals may be rejected if they have not been completed in line with the instructions or contain omissions.

You will not be able to amend proposal documents once they have been submitted. Please let us know as soon as practicable of any inconsistencies or omissions in your response.

Proposal documentation will remain the property of the CSA Centre and will be used only for purposes related to your proposal.

The CSA Centre is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoI), which means any information submitted to the CSA Centre may be disclosed under these obligations;

if you think any parts of your response are commercially sensitive, please mark them as so. (NB We may still need to disclose these under FoI requirements.)

You are responsible for all costs and expenses incurred in preparation of your proposal.

The process of requesting proposals and associated communications do not form any part of a contractual arrangement.

All information provided to you by the CSA Centre must be treated as confidential unless it is already in the public domain.

Independence is a key principle for the CSA Centre, and you will be required to disclose if you have any business or personal relationships or affiliations with the CSA Centre, the Home Office, Barnardo's, the Welsh Government or any of the CSA Centre's other partners.

The CSA Centre may ask for further information to be submitted within a reasonable timescale. These submissions should be made to the address in Section 11 below.

## 6. Supplier requirements

The CSA Centre requires proposals to be submitted on a proposal form only (see Appendix A). This must be accompanied by CV(s) of the individual(s) proposed to carry out the work, and an example of written work by the lead applicant. The proposal form must include contact details for one referee; please ensure that your referee is happy for the CSA Centre to contact them prior to any work taking place.

## 7. Governance and ethics

This commission will be overseen by Sophie Laws (Deputy Director of Research) and will be managed on a day-to-day basis by Kairika Karsna (Senior Research and Evaluation Officer). Kairika will work closely with the appointed researcher to develop the tools and support the fieldwork.

The research proposal will undergo an ethics process with the CSA Centre's Research Ethics Committee. The CSA Centre will coordinate this process.

The final report will be subject to internal CSA Centre review and external review by selected experts from a practice and research background.

## 8. Budget

The CSA Centre and the Welsh Government wish to allocate up to £12,240 (including VAT) for this research.

## 9. Payment and invoicing

Invoices should be submitted once all deliverables have been completed and accepted by the CSA Centre.

Please address invoices to Louise Middleton, CSA Centre, Barnardo House, Tanners Lane, Barkingside IG6 1QG.

Please ensure that all invoices include the typed buyer's reference 'XT01067911' and are sent in individual emails as individual PDF documents to both [apinvoices@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:apinvoices@barnardos.org.uk) and [Louise.Middleton@csacentre.org.uk](mailto:Louise.Middleton@csacentre.org.uk).

## 10. Proposal requirements

Proposal responses must:

- be received before the deadline
- be made on the proposal form (see Appendix A)
- include a CV for each individual proposed to undertake the work
- include at least one example of succinct, accessible published work, written by the lead applicant, which demonstrates an ability to deliver the work
- be signed by an authorised individual (including electronically)

Proposal documentation must provide:

- clear answers that focus only on the specific requirement being addressed
- a sufficiently detailed level of information to demonstrate how the requirements would be delivered
- honest answers
- a well-structured response that is easy for the reviewers to navigate, with accurate references to additional information provided
- a methodology that is clearly tailored to the requirements of the specification
- clear consideration of anticipated risks and how the bidder plans to mitigate these
- a clear indication of experience
- exact information about which individuals will deliver the work
- contact details for one referee.

## 11. Return of proposal instructions

Deadline for return of proposals: **5pm on Monday 19 November 2018.**

Email: [info@csacentre.org.uk](mailto:info@csacentre.org.uk)

Postal address:

FAO Kairika Karsna  
Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse  
Barnardo House  
Tanners Lane  
Barkingside  
IG6 1QG

Please mark post 'Private and confidential'.

## Appendix A: Proposal form

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Organisation: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Co-applicant name(s) and organisation(s): [Click here to enter text.](#)

### Experience of undertaking research using social care(or other agency) files or systems:

### Knowledge of social work practice:

### Experience of quantitative analysis and development of quantitative research tools:

### Experience of report writing to practitioner audiences

### Proposed methodology:

**Risks and mitigation:**

**Reference contact details:**

**I confirm I have attached a CV for the lead and each co-applicant, along with an example of written work**

**Signed**

**Date**

## Appendix B: Indicative timescales

Date	Activity
1 November 2018	Request for proposals sent out
9 November 2018	Deadline for questions and clarifications
13 November 2018	Responses circulated
19 November 2018	Deadline for proposals
26 November 2018	Shortlisting complete and applicants notified
Week beginning 3 December 2018	Interviews held
10 December 2018	Contract awarded
March 2019	Delivery completed