Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

The Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway

Request for proposals to write guidance that supports professionals in their role in working with children and families going through family court processes

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: Friday 4 July 2025

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About the CSA Centre

The CSA Centre's overall aim is to reduce the impact of child sexual abuse through improved prevention and better response, so that children can live free from the threat and harm of sexual abuse.

We are a multi-disciplinary team, funded primarily by the Home Office and hosted by Barnardo's, working closely with key partners from academic institutions, local authorities, health, education, police and the voluntary sector. We aim to:

- increase the priority given to child sexual abuse, by improving understanding of its scale and nature
- improve identification of and response to all children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse
- enable more effective disruption and prevention of child sexual abuse, through better understanding of sexually abusive behaviour / perpetration.

We seek to bring about these changes by:

- producing and sharing information about the scale and nature and response to child sexual abuse
- addressing gaps in knowledge through sharing research and evidence
- providing training and support for professionals and researchers working in the field
- engaging with and influencing policy.

As a thought leader in child sexual abuse, we are grounded in both evidence and insights from those working in practice. We annually collate the latest evidence on the scale and nature of child sexual abuse in England and Wales, produce and commission research to fill knowledge gaps, create guidance and resources and deliver training to inform those working with children to better intervene, protect and respond to children and victims and survivors when there are concerns of child sexual abuse.

For more information on our work, please visit our website: www.csacentre.org.uk

About the Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway (Response Pathway)

The <u>Response Pathway</u> is a free to use, semi-interactive resource that guides professionals through how they can protect and support children and their families when there are concerns of sexual abuse. The Response Pathway is made up of a map of "decision points" that link to evidence-based, best practice guidance for professionals to access as soon as they need it, starting at whichever decision point on the map for which they need advice: from first concerns and early help safeguarding through to child protection and criminal justice.

It is available at Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway | CSA Centre.

Throughout, the Response Pathway focuses on meeting the needs of children and their families. The advice is centred on how they might be feeling and what they hope will happen. It is designed to empower professionals to understand the role they, and their colleagues, can play to best protect and support children. It doesn't just tell professionals what to do, it helps them to understand how to do it.

The Response Pathway has three key aims:

- 1. Make the needs and perspectives of children central in professionals' responses to child sexual abuse.
- 2. Bring clarity to key response points so that professionals' responses to child sexual abuse meet the needs of children who are being or have been sexually abused, and the needs of their families.
- 3. Improve professionals' responses to child sexual abuse by providing a pathway that is grounded in evidence and good practice.

Building on current legislation, statutory guidance and national policies and procedures to provide specific advice on child sexual abuse, it provides clarity on professional responsibilities, clearly outlining the steps to take and the actions required at key stages in the safeguarding and protection process.

The Response Pathway aims to cover all forms of child sexual abuse whilst balancing this with the need to be as concise as possible. It also links to further information and resources to support professional practice.

Project overview: further developing the Response Pathway

Currently, the CSA Centre is refining and expanding guidance and best practice in the Response Pathway which clearly describes the actions required to deliver an effective response for sexually abused children during criminal and family justice processes.

As part of this work, the CSA Centre seeks an individual, team or organisation to write guidance documents to support professionals working with children and their families going through public and private family law proceedings. Following external consultation, the CSA

Centre has identified approximately <u>eight decision points</u> (see Table 1) across the private and public family court systems for which we require guidance documents.

We would expect each document to be no longer than 5000 words - as a general guide, the majority of existing guiding documents in the Response Pathway are between 1500 - 4500 words.

Decision Point	Private family law proceedings	Public family law proceedings
1	The court responds to an application	A decision is made to go into pre-proceedings
2	When concerns of child sexual abuse are raised at the first hearing dispute resolution appointment (FHDRA)	A decision is made to go into proceedings
31	When the judge instructs a fact-finding hearing in the context of child sexual abuse	
4	When child arrangements are ordered in Dispute Resolution Appointment(s)	Decision is made at the final hearing
5		Planning for the care of the child once an order has been made

Table 1: overview of decision points requiring guidance documents

The tendered work will contribute to outcomes including:

- easy access to evidence-based guidance for all professionals on working with children affected by child sexual abuse
- clear description of what constitutes best practice for children subject to criminal or family justice processes where there are concerns of child sexual abuse
- greater alignment in knowledge and understanding on best practice for children between those working within and those working outside the criminal and family justice systems
- improved support to children in the justice system, leading to better engagement with it and improved victim experience.

¹ This guidance document will cover both private and public family court processes.

Anyone working in the best interests of children is the core audience for the Response Pathway, and those professionals may have backgrounds in social care (including Cafcass), education, healthcare, policing, the voluntary sector and the judicial system.

Specification

The chosen individual, team or organisation must have a sound knowledge of the judicial system, practice experience in family law proceedings and a strong knowledge of child sexual abuse. It will be important to have regard for the cross-over with criminal court processes.

Crucially, the chosen provider must have relevant experience of writing in a succinct, accessible format for a wide range of professionals working with children and families. To demonstrate this, we require at least one piece of relevant written (and if necessary, anonymised) work to be included in the response to this tender.

The guidance documents must be written in line with the style and structure of the existing sections of the Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway, including emphasising children's voices identified through a review of existing research. The authors must ensure that the tone and language used throughout is respectful to the feelings and experiences of children, their families and those with lived experience of child sexual abuse, from a diverse range of backgrounds.

We are keen that there is a strong focus throughout the development process on collaboration between the CSA Centre and the chosen provider.

The work will involve:

- identifying and understanding relevant legislation and statutory guidance to ensure the Response Pathway's new guidance documents are consistent with these, and up to date.
- utilising knowledge of other useful, evidence-based resources already in existence in this space, ensuring that children's voices, derived from these resources, are included in guidance documents
- being cognisant of the impact of the personal characteristics of children and their families, and how they may intersect with one another.
- drafting the guidance documents, ensuring they enhance and do not replicate existing guidance in the context of child sexual abuse and criminal and family court processes
- collaborating with a small advisory group (including members of the CSA Centre team, and legal professionals and experts by experience) who will:
 - highlight the key information most useful for practitioners, policy makers and commissioners
 - support the development of the guidance documents in relation to content, style and tone.
 - review drafts of the guidance documents as part of the review process (see below)

• responding to feedback from the CSA Centre and an agreed group of external reviewers throughout the development process.

We require a completed and publishable product by no later than the **end of February 2026**. Timeliness of delivery will be a factor in our commissioning decision making process. Bids should provide a timeline of activity and deliverables in line with the below.

The review process

The CSA Centre will carry out an extensive review process with each guidance document undergoing three rounds of review. The process includes two rounds of internal review by CSA Centre staff (including the copy editor), and a round of external review undertaken by up to five professionals identified by the CSA Centre and who have experience of the family courts system.

The first internal review stage (1) will take place after all first draft guidance documents have been submitted. Once all guidance documents have been revised in response to internal feedback they will be sent out by the CSA Centre for external review (2). Internal reviewers will then conduct a final review once all feedback has been incorporated (3).

The review framework will need to be considered in the planning process and timescales. We suggest you allow one working day per guidance document to respond to comments as we move through the review process.

Activity	Proposed date
Deadline for proposals	4 July
Shortlisting complete	7 July
Interviews with candidates	14 – 17 July
Provider appointed	17 July
First meetings with CSA Centre and advisory group	From 21 July
Submission of one draft guidance document for review and an outline for the rest of the documents	Mid-September
Submission of all first draft guidance documents	Mid-October
Submission of all finalised documents	End of February

Timeline of activities

Contracting authority

The contracting authority is Barnardo's (Company Number: 61625 whose registered office 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.

The winning bidder will be requested to enter into an agreement in the form included in Appendix D. Bidders should feel free to provide any feedback to the CSA Centre at the time of bidding on any of the provisions within the draft agreement that may require negotiation.

Governance

This commission will be overseen by Dr Jasmin Tregidga (Principal Research and Evaluation Officer) and Jane Wiffin (Practice Improvement Advisor) at the CSA Centre. Dr Tregidga will manage the project on a day-to-day basis.

In addition, the CSA Centre will set up a small advisory group (including members of the CSA Centre team, and legal professionals and experts by experience). It is expected that the successful bidder will work closely with this advisory group in the development of each guidance document. We anticipate three meetings between the supplier and this advisory group. The timing and focus of each meeting will be discussed on confirmation of appointment.

Budget

The CSA Centre has a maximum budget of £40,000 for this work, inclusive of VAT. As a notfor-profit organisation we need to ensure that everything we deliver is as cost-effective as possible, and value for money will be a key criteria in scoring these bids. Bids that are priced below this budget will therefore be considered favourably, and responses in excess of this budget will need to include a strong rationale for the additional expenditure.

Payment and invoicing

Invoices should be submitted once all deliverables are completed and accepted by the CSA Centre. Invoices should be submitted electronically and sent to Louise Middleton, at https://www.noise.middleton@csacentre.org.uk.

Tendering conditions and requirements

Information provided by the CSA Centre is done so in good faith and was believed to be correct at the time of publication;

Your tender response must demonstrate how the specifications are to be met, this should be in the Supplier proposal form (Appendix A), along with a short CV, and an example of succinct accessible written work;

The CSA Centre may contact your referee to ensure you are able to complete the work to the CSA Centre's standards;

Tender responses may be rejected if they have not been completed in line with instructions or contain omissions;You must also complete and submit a declaration of interests form (Appendix B).

The deadline for the submission of tenders is Friday 4 July 2025.

Tenders must be submitted to info@csacentre.org.uk

You will not be able to amend tender documents once they have been submitted. If you subsequently discover any inconsistencies or omissions in your response, please let us know as soon as practicable by emailing <u>info@csacentre.org.uk</u>.

Tender documentation will remain the property of the CSA Centre and will be used only for tendering purposes.

The CSA Centre is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, 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 freedom of information requirements.)

You are responsible for all costs and expenses incurred in preparation of the tender response.

The tendering process 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 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 clarification requests should be submitted to the email address: info@csacentre.org.uk.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all your staff members or subcontractors involved with this tendering process abide by these conditions.

The CSA Centre reserves the right to cancel or vary this tendering process, and to reject any or all of the bids.

If you have any questions about the tendering process, please email them to info@csacentre.org.uk.

Bid assessment criteria

Compliance checks

- Tender response is received before the deadline.
- A completed supplier response form and declaration of interests form is included, along with all additional documents required (see previous section).
- Pricing information is included.
- The bidder response form has been signed by an authorised individual.

Scoring and weighting

The bidder response form must provide:

- clear and honest answers, each focusing only on the specific requirement being addressed
- sufficient detail to demonstrate how the requirements would be delivered
- a well-structured response that is easy for CSA Centre staff assessing the bid to navigate, including accurate references to additional information
- answers that are clearly tailored to meet the CSA Centre's specific needs
- a clear indication of experience
- responses that suggest that you will deliver above the organisation's requirements and expectations.

When shortlisting bids, CSA Centre staff will apply a scoring mechanism to your bidder response form. In each of the six areas listed below, they will allocate a score using the following scale to indicate the degree to which each criterion is met:

Not met				Fully met
1	2	3	4	5

Understa	nding of requirements and context (total score range 1–10)		
Score A	Weighting: 10		
0	The proposer has demonstrated good understanding of the CSA Centre and its aims.		
0	The proposer has demonstrated strong knowledge of child sexual abuse and the wider sector around child sexual abuse.		
0	There is a commitment to work closely with the CSA Centre throughout the project to completion.		
Company	experience (score range 1–10)		
Score B	Weighting: 10		
0	The provider has sound knowledge of the judicial system and relevant practice experience in family law proceedings.		
0	The provider has relevant experience of working for voluntary-sector clients.		
0	The provider has relevant experience of developing guidance to support a range of professionals in their role in working with children and families.		
0	The provider's experience is recent.		
Capability	Capability and skills of the team (score range 1–10)		
Score C	Weighting: 10		
0	The proposed individual/team has evidenced the ability to write in a succinct, accessible format for a wide range of professionals working with children and families.		
0	The proposed project team are skilled in, and comfortable with, interacting with a range of professionals with experience of the family courts system.		
0	There is a named project manager, and roles and responsibilities of the project team are clearly outlined.		
0	There is evidence of contingency planning with regard to the project team.		
Outlined a	Outlined approach to meeting objectives (score range 1–10)		
Score D	Weighting: 10		
0	The detail provided gives confidence that the aims and objectives will be met.		

0	There is a strong rationale as to the chosen approach to writing the guidance documents.		
0	The proposal includes an effective strategy to ensure the most up to date guidance and evidence of good practice is included in each document.		
Timescale	cales (score range 1–10)		
Score E	Weighting: 10		
0	The timescales proposed are realistic and achievable. (If an extension is required, a clear and convincing rationale is given.)		
0	The timescales proposed are clearly displayed and indicate actions required of the CSA Centre.		
Budget/ex	Budget/expenses and value for money (score range 1–5)		
Score F	Weighting: 5		
0	The proposer can deliver the project within the available budget		
0	There is evidence of added value in the proposal		
0	Day rates and costs are clearly communicated and easy to understand using the template provided in the supplier response form (Appendix A)		

Appendix A – Supplier response form

Supplier details		
Supplier name		
Company registration number or equivalent		
Registered address		
Website address		
VAT registration number		
Date of VAT registration		
Bank name		
Bank account number		
Bank sort code		
Details of main contact		
Name		
Job title		
Business address		
Telephone number(s)		
Email address		

Executive summary

Keep to one side of A4. This should provide the CSA Centre with a clear, concise and complete summary of your tender, highlighting key strengths, providing insight into the reasoning and rationale behind the response, demonstrating how the tender represents value for money to the CSA Centre.

A. Understanding of requirements and context

Keep your response to a maximum of one side of A4.

Please demonstrate:

- your understanding of the CSA Centre and its aims
- your understanding of child sexual abuse and the wider sector around child sexual abuse
- your commitment to work closely with the CSA Centre throughout the project.

B. Company experience

Keep your response to a maximum of one side of A4.

Please demonstrate that:

- you have sound knowledge of the judicial system and relevant practice experience in family law proceedings.
- you have relevant experience of working for not-for-profit sector clients
- you have relevant experience of developing guidance to support a range of professionals in their role in working with children and families.
- your experience is recent.

C. Capability and skills of the team

Keep your response to a maximum of one side of A4.

Please demonstrate that:

- the proposed project team has evidenced the ability to write in a succinct, accessible format for a wide range of professionals working with children and families
- the proposed project team is skilled in, and comfortable with, interacting with a range of professionals with experience of the family courts system
- there is a named project manager
- the roles and responsibilities of the project team are clearly defined
- contingency planning is in place with regard to the project team.

D. Outlined approach to meeting objectives

Keep your response to a maximum of one side of A4.

Please demonstrate:

- how the aims and objectives will be met
- the rationale behind the chosen approach to writing the guidance documents
- how you will ensure the most up to date guidance and evidence of good practice is included in each document.

E. Timescales

Keep your response to a maximum of one side of A4.

Please set out clear timescales and indicate the actions required of the CSA Centre.

Please demonstrate that the timescales proposed are realistic and achievable

F. Budget/expenses and value for money

Please provide a clear breakdown of proposed activities, the day rate of members of your team, and the number of days required to complete each task.

Please demonstrate the added value your company would bring.

Expected full cost of project	
Day rate per role/blended day rate	
Expenses incurred	
Additional infrastructure charges	
Discounts/rebates you have applied	
Other charges, e.g. cancellation fees	

Please add further detail if necessary:

Declaration	
I accept the CSA Centre's terms and conditions	Yes / No If No, please state which clauses you would wish to negotiate:
The documentation submitted constitutes my full and final tender response	Yes / No
My tender shall remain open for acceptance for a period of 90 days after the deadline for receipt of tender responses	Yes / No
Name of authorised person	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix B: Declaration of interests form

Description of interest (please refer to the list below)	Relevant dates
Please state "no interests to declare" if none applies to you	

Please state any interests relating to:

employment²

consultancies or quasi-employment with outside organisations

any involvement with Barnardo's (see footnote)

public, charitable or regulatory appointments, whether or not remunerated

directorships, trusteeships or other position of responsibility in commercial, charitable, regulatory or other organisations, whether or not remunerated

direct or indirect financial interests (in the order of £100k), including significant shareholdings, in organisations which may be affected by the work of the CSA Centre or which supply or propose to supply services to the CSA Centre

the interests of close associates (for example family members) who hold employment, positions of responsibility or other interests in organisations which may be affected by the work of the CSA Centre.

Signed	Date

² Staff working at the CSA Centre are employees of Barnardo's and this does not need a specific declaration.

Approved (CSA Centre Director)

Date

Appendix C: Whistleblowing procedure

How to raise a concern

In the first instance you should raise your concern with the Assistant Director – Business Support or your main contact at the CSA Centre. You can do this verbally or in writing. If you are unsure about raising a concern because you don't know if it is relevant, or whether it falls within this policy, you are encouraged to come forward so that the matter can be discussed and advice given.

How the CSA Centre will respond

On receiving your concern we will contact you, usually within five working days of receipt, giving you:

- confirmation that the concern has been received and will be investigated
- the name of the person who will investigate it
- a named point of contact during the investigation
- temporary alternative working arrangements (if applicable).

How we will investigate

- 1. The investigator will contact you to discuss your concern in more detail. If necessary, the investigator will meet with you to find out all the facts and check any details. You may be asked to give a statement. Once the investigator clarifies your concern, if he/she believes the concerns fall outside this policy you will be advised of the alternative route to follow.
- 2. The investigator will take reasonable steps to investigate the concern as quickly as possible, depending on the circumstances of the case. We will keep you informed as to the likely duration of the investigation.
- 3. Once the investigation is complete, we will contact you to confirm the outcome and any action planned. Because of confidentiality and data protection, we may not be able to give you full details of our findings, but we will discuss this with you fully and explain our decisions.

How to appeal a decision

- 4. If you do not think your concerns have been addressed, you may appeal the decision by writing to the Director of the CSA Centre within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome. You should state clearly and succinctly the reasons you are appealing and any alternative outcome you think is appropriate. The purpose of the appeal is to assess whether the conclusions and actions decided during the investigation were appropriate based on all the evidence available.
- 5. The Director will contact you to discuss your appeal, and will then decide whether any further investigation is needed as part of the appeal.
- 6. We will contact you to explain the outcome of the appeal and any new or changed actions. Because of confidentiality and data protection, we may not be able to give you full details of our findings, but we will discuss this with you fully and explain our decisions. This is the end of the process.

Appendix D: Terms and conditions of contract

The winning bidder will be requested to enter into a consultancy agreement as set out below. At the time of bidding, please use the Declaration section of the supplier response form (see Appendix 3) to provide feedback on any provisions within the agreement that may require negotiation.

Consultancy agreement

I have pleasure in confirming the following terms and conditions under which you will provide 1) the consultancy services as described below and in the attached Schedule 1 (the 'Initial Services') and 2) any further services in accordance with clause below, to Barnardo's (the 'Company'):

Initial Services

- 1. This Agreement will commence as of [date] and you will complete the Initial Services by [date] or such later date as we may agree in writing.
- 2. During the consultancy you will give the Company advice and information, carry out studies and make reports as specified in Schedule 1 and in accordance with any reasonable instructions of the Company. The Company's representative(s) for the purpose of giving any instructions and approvals under this Agreement shall be me and such other persons as I may nominate in writing.
- 3. In consideration of the Initial Services, the Company will pay you the Fees described in Schedule 1 (the 'Fees').

Further Services

- 4. Barnardo's may wish to instruct you to carry out further services ("Further Services"). Any such request for Further Services will be made by Barnardo's in writing by submitting to you a Further Services Order Form in the form set out in Schedule 2.
- 5. The Further Services Order Form will contain detail of the services requested, Fees and any applicable deadlines.
- 6. Acceptance by you of the Further Services Order Form shall be communicated in writing or by beginning the performance of the Further Services.
- 7. Further Services will be carried out pursuant to these same terms and conditions contained within this letter.

Fees

- 8. Where the Fees are quoted on a daily rate basis, a day shall mean up to 7 hours' work. Any hours worked beyond 7 hours in a day shall be charged pro-rata to the Company.
- 9. All reasonable travel expenses, and any other expenses pre-agreed with the Company in writing, properly and necessarily incurred by you in the proper performance of the Services shall be reimbursed by the Company provided that all travel will be undertaken at the most economic rates reasonably available and in any event any item of expense which may exceed £200 will be agreed with the Company in advance.

- 10. You will raise invoices on the Company (and send them to the below address marked for my attention) showing the fees due and expenses claimed with documentary evidence of such expenses.
- 11. All sums due under this Agreement are exclusive of VAT which where applicable will be paid by the Company to you in addition to any amount or rate quoted.
- 12. You will be responsible for the payment of any income tax, insurance contributions or other taxes, revenues or duties arising as a result of the performance of the Services or otherwise under this Agreement. For the avoidance of doubt neither you nor any person engaged by you in the performance of the Services will be an employee of the Company in performing the Services.

Confidentiality

- 13. You will promptly communicate in confidence to the Company all ideas generated, work done, results produced and inventions made in the performance of the Services ('Results'). You will not, without the written consent of the Company, use or disclose to any other person or organisation either during or after termination of this Agreement any confidential information of the Company that may come into your possession. For this purpose all Results shall be treated as the confidential information of the Company. You will in any event enter into the non-disclosure agreement annexed to this Agreement as Appendix 1.
- 14. On any termination of this Agreement you will return to the Company all documents, records (on any media) and other property belonging to the Company that are in your possession and are capable of delivery and you will retain no copies thereof in any form.
- 15. You undertake that all copyright, design right, rights to apply for patents, patents and other intellectual property in the Results shall belong to the Company. In consideration of the fees payable under this Agreement, you agree on demand to assign forthwith to the Company all intellectual property in the Results at any time after their coming into existence. At the Company's request and expense (but without further payment to you) you will use all reasonable endeavours to enable the Company at its discretion to make formal application anywhere in the world to obtain and maintain intellectual property in the Results.
- 16. Without prejudice to any other right or remedy, if you commit any material breach of, or fail to comply with, any of your obligations under this Agreement, become bankrupt or any judgment is made against you and remains unsatisfied for 7 days, the Company shall be entitled to terminate this Agreement forthwith on written notice to you.

Termination

- 17. Either party may terminate this Agreement and your services by giving no less than one months' notice in writing to the other.
- 18. If you are, or become, unavailable to work on the Services, this Agreement may be terminated by either Party giving written notice to the other Party such notice to take effect either forthwith or as specified in the notice.
- 19. Neither Party shall be liable to the other Party in contract, tort, negligence, breach of statutory duty or otherwise for any loss, damage, costs or expenses of any nature whatsoever incurred or suffered by that other Party of an indirect or consequential nature

including without limitation any economic loss or other loss of turnover, profits, business or goodwill.

- 20. This Agreement is personal to you and may not be assigned by you. This Agreement does not give you any authority to act as agent of the Company. Nor can any part of the agreement, duties or obligations be sub-contracted.
- 21. For the purpose of ensuring compliance with your obligations under this Agreement the Company shall have access to and the right to inspect any work being carried out by you under this Agreement.
- 22. This Agreement is made under English law and the parties submit to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.
- 23. This agreement does not create any right enforceable by any person not a party to it.

Schedule 1 – Initial Services

[description of services to be performed by the Consultant]

Outputs

[outputs]

Fees

[fees to be paid for those services] [VAT included/No VAT to be charged]

To be invoiced upon completion and acceptance of the outputs.