

Centre of
expertise
on child
sexual abuse

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Training and development framework

October 2026



Introduction

This training framework provides a structured approach to developing the knowledge, skills and professional confidence required to prevent, identify and respond to child sexual abuse.

It is designed for *everyone* who is responsible for the learning and development of people who work (or who manage or have strategic oversight of those who work) with children and families, across all sectors and levels of experience – whether this is in a public-facing role (such as in transport or hospitality) or a professional role (in the health, education, social care, or policing sectors, for example).

Each individual's training needs and expectations depend on their role, their level of responsibility, and their stage of professional development. This framework sets out what individuals should know and be able to do at each level of safeguarding responsibility, ensuring that learning is consistent, progressive and appropriately matched to need.

By providing clear learning pathways, from foundational awareness through to advanced and strategic safeguarding practice, the framework supports your organisation to deliver training that is relevant, proportionate and aligned with your statutory duties. It also promotes a shared language and understanding of child sexual abuse – including both abuse by adults and harmful sexual behaviour by other children – across organisations and sectors, strengthening multi-agency working and improving the quality of responses to children and families.

Who is the framework for?

This framework is designed for anyone involved in the learning, development and professional support of practitioners who work with children (which we define as anyone under the age of 18) and families in England and/or Wales.

It is relevant across all public-facing services and sectors, including education, health, social care, policing, youth services, hospitality, transport, and the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

It is particularly useful for anyone with a safeguarding responsibility within the organisation or service where they work. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **learning and development leads** responsible for planning, commissioning, or delivering safeguarding training
- **supervisors and managers** who support staff development and oversee safeguarding practice
- **training teams and safeguarding specialists** designing or quality-assuring learning related to child sexual abuse
- **senior management in organisations and agencies** seeking a consistent, evidence-informed approach to developing their workforce.

How was the framework developed?

This framework adopts the structure used in the [National safeguarding training, learning and development framework](#) developed by Social Care Wales. The Welsh national framework is designed to be used alongside national safeguarding training standards; we mirror that intent here, so that practitioners and professionals at all levels gain the right knowledge, at the right time, for the responsibilities they hold with regard to all types of harm that may be considered within a child safeguarding context.

The intention of this framework is to utilise the learning from Social Care Wales and focus on how it can be applied to support the development of the knowledge, skills and professional confidence required to prevent, identify and respond to child sexual abuse across England and Wales.

How to use the framework

The framework is for anyone with a responsibility for supporting the learning and development of others whose role brings them into contact with children and families. It is intended to complement existing safeguarding training, and to support you in identifying what people in your organisation, team, service or multi-agency partnership need to know about child sexual abuse.

Please note that this framework relates only to learning on child sexual abuse and should not be considered as a substitute for wider safeguarding training.

The framework is divided into six categories to allow you to select the most appropriate learning for the group you are most interested in or responsible for.

- Group A** anyone whose role may bring them into contact with children or families in any community context
- Group B** anyone who works in a role with a safeguarding responsibility
- Group C** anyone with management or supervision responsibilities for colleagues in Groups A and B
- Group D** anyone with safeguarding decision-making responsibilities within their agency or community service
- Group E** anyone making complex or unusual decisions about safeguarding, including funding arrangements
- Group F** anyone with strategic oversight or organisational compliance responsibilities

Please note that a single individual can be in multiple categories; it is common for people to be in both Group C and Group D, for example.

There is an expectation that people in each group will also hold the knowledge from the previous group, e.g. those in Group B need to have the foundation knowledge of those in Group A as well as the knowledge related to their own group.

People in Group F should have at least foundational awareness of child sexual abuse, but they are not expected to hold the same operational or specialist knowledge as those in Groups B to E. Their role is to seek expert advice where needed, and to ensure appropriate organisational oversight, assurance and resourcing.

Please note that, within each group, the column outlining example roles is intended not to give an exhaustive list of everyone who could fulfil that role, but to offer examples to aid your thinking about what is needed for your service, provision, organisation or agency.

The framework contains links to CSA Centre resources which can help you understand what people in each group need to know, and can provide ideas on how you might support them to develop that knowledge.

Group A – anyone whose role may bring them into contact with children or families in any community context

Role or responsibility level	Example roles	Learning focus	Useful CSA Centre resources
If someone in this group sees something wrong or is worried about something that has happened or might happen to a child, they need to recognise that they have a responsibility to report it and understand how to do this.	Hotel staff Security staff Fast food staff Taxi drivers Shopkeepers Park keepers Street cleaners Rail/transport personnel Elected and council leaders without specific safeguarding responsibilities	People in this group need to recognise that: - child sexual abuse, including harmful sexual behaviour by other children, happens more than people think - if they see a child behaving in a way that concerns them, or an adult behaving in a concerning way towards or around a child, they should report it. They also need to know: - where and how to report concerns of child sexual abuse or harmful sexual behaviour - the different contexts in which child sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour might occur.	<i><u>What You Need to Know about Child Sexual Abuse</u></i>

Details of all our resources are available on the [CSA Centre website](#).

Group B – anyone who works in a role with a safeguarding responsibility

Role or responsibility level	Example roles	Learning focus	Useful CSA Centre resources
Practitioners in this group have regular contact with children or families. They are expected to recognise signs that may indicate a child is being sexually abused, or that someone around a child is behaving in a harmful way. If they have concerns or if a child tells them about sexual abuse, they are expected to respond appropriately, following local safeguarding procedures. They may have a discussion with their line manager or designated safeguarding lead/person, or report directly to social services.	Teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors Student social workers Healthcare assistants Youth workers Care home workers Nursery workers Civilian officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) Childminders Sports coaches	People in this group need to: - recognise the possible signs and indicators of child sexual abuse and abusive behaviour, and understand that they have a role in asking children about them - understand their role in helping children to tell about sexual abuse, and know how to respond if a child does tell them - understand their role in supporting parents and carers affected by child sexual abuse - know what they can do within their role to recognise child sexual abuse or abusive behaviour - understand and recognise the factors that can increase risk of sexual abuse for children. Note that people in this group also need to have the foundation knowledge of those in Group A above.	<i>Signs and Indicators: A Template for Identifying and Recording Concerns of Child Sexual Abuse</i> <i>Communicating with Children: A Guide for Those Working with Children Who Have or May Have Been Sexually Abused</i> <i>Supporting Parents and Carers: A Guide for Those Working with Families Affected by Child Sexual Abuse</i> Introductory webinars

Details of all our resources are available on the [CSA Centre website](#).

Group C – anyone with management or supervision responsibilities for colleagues in Groups A and B

Role or responsibility level	Example roles	Learning focus	Useful CSA Centre resources
Managers/supervisors in this group are expected to recognise and respond to any concerns that they become aware of, decide what immediate safeguarding action is needed, make a referral to children's social care and/or a report to the police if they deem this necessary, and take responsibility for gathering and sharing information as appropriate. (This group may include your organisation's safeguarding lead, who will <i>also</i> be in Group D.)	GPs, paediatricians, health visitors, midwives Designated safeguarding leads/persons (DSLs/DSPs) in education settings Family support workers Youth justice practitioners Domestic abuse service leads Youth homelessness service leads Therapists Safeguarding leads in sports clubs Neighbourhood police officers Youth advocacy workers Court professionals in the criminal court and Family Court systems Experts making recommendations in the criminal court and Family Court Family Court mediators Children's advocates Voluntary-sector workers providing legal advice or representation	People in this group need to know: - what relevant information their organisation has which can be shared, and what information they can ask for from other agencies in order to safeguard the child - what actions they can take, including immediate next steps - what the people they manage or supervise need in relation to training, supervision and support. Note that people in this group also need to have the foundation knowledge of those in Group B above.	<i>Sharing Information to Tackle Child Sexual Abuse: An Introductory Guide for Practitioners</i> <i>Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway</i> <i>CSA Centre training courses</i> <i>Using Supervision and Team Meetings to Improve Responses to Child Sexual Abuse</i>

Details of all our resources are available on the [CSA Centre website](#).

Group D – anyone with safeguarding decision-making responsibilities within their agency or community service

Role or responsibility level	Example roles	Learning focus	Useful CSA Centre resources
People in this group are responsible for leading, contributing to or making safeguarding decisions, assessments, planning and multi-agency response. For example, they may need to decide whether a Child Protection Conference is needed, whether a child requires an assessment or therapeutic input, and whether the child needs a specific type of care and support package in relation to a placement or setting. They may also be responsible for making decisions about the person of concern, including around criminal justice processes, disruption activities and assessments of risk. These decisions can be complex and are likely to involve other safeguarding partners. (Some people in this group will be responsible for managing or supervising others, and so are <i>also</i> in Group C).	Designated safeguarding leads/persons (DSLs/DSPs) in education settings, headteachers Social workers, social work managers Police constables, detective constables, detective sergeants Members of multi-agency child protection teams Specialist voluntary-sector service leaders	People in this group need to know: • how to assess and manage risk • how to make decisions about safeguarding • how to make an effective referral. Note that people in this group also need to have the foundation knowledge of those in Group C above.	Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway CSA Centre training courses

Details of all our resources are available on the [CSA Centre website](#).

Group E – anyone making complex or unusual decisions about safeguarding, including funding arrangements

Role or responsibility level	Example roles	Learning focus	Useful CSA Centre resources
People in this group are responsible for making or authorising highly complex safeguarding decisions in relation to the response to child sexual abuse, including decisions on funding arrangements and whether to apply for an appropriate court order. For example, Group D practitioners may escalate a situation to a higher level if it is particularly complex, challenging or costly in relation to safeguarding a child, or where multiple children or people of concern are involved.	Designated doctors, designated/named nurses Service managers or heads of service (e.g. within local authority children's services or youth justice services) Probation Delivery Unit delivery heads Police detective inspectors, detective chief inspectors, chief superintendents Directors and assistant directors of local authority children's services Judicial decision-makers Heads of multi-agency child protection teams	People in this group need to understand: • their organisation's escalation procedures • what their staff team need in relation to training, supervision and support • their role in contributing to the improvement of the local/regional strategic response to child sexual abuse. Note that people in this group also need to have the foundation knowledge of those in Group D above.	<u>Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway</u> <u>Using Supervision and Team Meetings to Improve Responses to Child Sexual Abuse</u> <u>Developing your Strategic Response to Child Sexual Abuse: A Guide for Safeguarding Children Partnerships</u>

Details of all our resources are available on the [CSA Centre website](#).

Group F – anyone with strategic oversight or organisational compliance responsibilities

Role or responsibility level	Example roles	Learning focus	Useful CSA Centre resources
People in this group are at executive, senior management and governance level; they are responsible for identifying gaps in local provision, and for commissioning services to address those gaps. Relying on expert advice, they hold overall responsibility for ensuring that their organisation is complying with its safeguarding requirements, and that their workforce has access to the knowledge, resources, supervision and support it needs to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities. They can redirect resources if required.	Boards of trustees/governors Assistant chief constables, deputy chief constables, chief constables Lead Safeguarding Partners Board executives Non-executive directors Health boards Independent scrutineers	People in this group must be able to: - identify gaps in provision and commission services to fill these gaps - act on the findings of local and national reviews - take a lead in improving the strategic response to child sexual abuse through the development of a clear action plan - keep up to date with local and national data on the identification of and response to child sexual abuse - ensure their workforce has access to all the knowledge, resources and information they need to fulfil their roles. Note that people in this group also need the same level of knowledge as those in Group A above.	<i><u>Funding and Commissioning Child Sexual Abuse Services: Why It's Important, and How to Do It Well</u></i> <i><u>Developing your Strategic Response to Child Sexual Abuse: A Guide for Safeguarding Children Partnerships</u></i> Data Insights Hub: Instant access to local and national data on child sexual abuse in England and Wales CSA Centre training and events Overview of CSA Centre research reports and practice resources

About the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (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 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 of, 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.

For more information on our work, please visit our website:

www.csacentre.org.uk

The logo is a square with a green-to-blue gradient background. It features a stylized, abstract geometric pattern of overlapping triangles in shades of green and blue. The text "Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within the square.

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

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This resource was written by Emma Hodgson and Natasha Sabin, practice improvement advisors at the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, with input from colleagues.

The photograph on the cover was taken using actors and does not depict an actual situation.

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