**Centre of
expertise**
on child
sexual abuse

Effectiveness of services for sexually abused children and young people: research programme briefing

October 2019

About the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre) wants children to be able to live free from the threat and harm of sexual abuse.

Our aim is to reduce the impact of child sexual abuse through improved prevention and better response.

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. However, 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 child sexual abuse.

To tackle child sexual abuse we must understand its causes, scope, scale and impact. We know a lot about child sexual abuse and have made progress in dealing with it, but there are still many gaps in our knowledge and understanding which limit how effectively the issue is tackled.

Introduction

The CSA Centre is committed to building the evidence base on the effectiveness of services that respond to child sexual abuse (CSA).

This briefing paper brings together key findings from a suite of three studies carried out as part of our 'Understanding Effectiveness' programme of research, which built on our previous work in order to:

- improve understanding of the effectiveness of services responding to CSA

- suggest how the CSA Centre can further contribute to this.

These studies are described in the following reports, all published by the CSA Centre in October 2019:

Effectiveness of services for sexually abused children and young people, Report 1: A knowledge review – Di McNeish, Liz Kelly and Sara Scott.

Effectiveness of services for sexually abused children and young people, Report 2: A survey of service providers – Diana Parkinson and Rosaline Sullivan.

Effectiveness of services for sexually abused children and young people, Report 3: Perspectives of service users with learning difficulties or experience of care – Anita Franklin, Louise Bradley and Geraldine Brady.

We framed this programme of work around the idea of effectiveness, which can be defined as the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result. Our focus included questions of measurement, but went beyond that to look at what the desired results are, how it is known whether they are achieved, and the processes that can create intended results.

Throughout the programme we have questioned our own assumptions and stepped back to ask what 'effective' means in services for sexually abused children. It is crucial to check that we are focusing on what matters most for children and young people, rather than on what can most readily be counted.

In this paper we set out the origins of the Understanding Effectiveness programme, draw out key insights from across the three reports, and propose next steps.

1. Origins of the Understanding Effectiveness programme

This section establishes the context in which the Understanding Effectiveness programme was commissioned, and the questions it sought to answer.

Why don't we know more about the effectiveness of CSA services?

There are many reasons for the current lack of understanding of 'effectiveness' in terms of responses to CSA. Service providers often lack the time, knowledge or resources to develop and implement evaluation systems – which limits their ability to investigate and show how effective they are. Furthermore, services are delivered in a range of different ways, in different sectors, and providers take many different approaches to their work; this makes it difficult to develop a wider picture of what effectiveness means for services responding to CSA.

As understanding effectiveness is an area where research interacts with practice, some tensions and contradictions arise. Commissioners and policymakers often, reasonably, seek evidence of effectiveness that meets high research standards – ideally through randomised controlled trials. However, carrying out large-scale research of this nature is especially challenging in a context where guidance on best practice stresses the need for interventions to be tailored to the individual child or young person.[1] The diversity of experiences of CSA, and of the children and young people affected by it, makes the provision of assistance a delicate process that cannot easily be captured for comparative study. Equally, the outcomes achieved through this work are diverse, ranging from bringing the abuse to an end through to improving engagement with education and emotional recovery.

What has the CSA Centre previously done to improve understanding of effectiveness?

Previous work undertaken by the CSA Centre to improve understanding of effectiveness has focused on helping services to evaluate their work.

Supporting CSA services to develop their capacity for evaluation

Between October 2017 and March 2018, 17 organisations responding to CSA in England and Wales received grants and support through our 'Evaluation Fund' to improve their capacity for assessing and evidencing their services' effectiveness. They worked alongside evaluation consultants to develop evaluation processes and produce stronger evidence on their way of working. Additional resources, such as guidance around developing a Theory of Change, were made available through our website. And learning events brought the organisations and evaluation consultants together to share their progress, discuss challenges and celebrate accomplishments.

Our report *The CSA Centre's Evaluation Fund: A reflection* documents the activities undertaken and the responses of the organisations supported. These examples show the diversity of the work they carried out, much of which involved consultation with service users:

‣ development of a theory of change and an initial set of tools through consultation with women and girls who had used or were using a service

‣ a scoping exercise for a client database

‣ development of an outcomes tool in consultation with staff and young people

‣ consultation on evaluation tools with management, frontline staff, children and young people, and parents and carers.

Some of the organisations subsequently piloted the new outcomes tools which they developed, with positive results. Many used existing data to understand more about their services and service users – such work included a social return on investment analysis, an assessment of the barriers that children in care may face in accessing health assessments at sexual assault referral centres; and exploration of the experiences of young people placed in secure residential accommodation because they are at risk of sexual exploitation.

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1   See *Working Effectively to Address Child Sexual Exploitation: An Evidence Scope* (Research in Practice, 2017).

Grantees told us that the support they received had improved their:

- appreciation of the value of evaluation

- understanding of the complexity of the support they provided

- awareness of the need for tools that measure outcomes accurately and are designed with the involvement of young people.

Publishing a practical guide to evaluation

Following a workshop to share elements of good monitoring and evaluation practice with CSA service providers that had not been supported through the Evaluation Fund, in June 2019 we published *Measuring your effectiveness: A practical guide for services working with children and young people affected by sexual abuse*. This guide focuses on how to design and implement monitoring and evaluation systems within CSA services, and also provides information on carrying out an external evaluation. Topics covered include:

- why evaluation is important for CSA services, and the challenges they face in evaluating their work

- issues of particular importance to CSA services when developing evaluation systems, such as taking account of ethical issues, obtaining informed consent and taking a trauma-informed approach

- the stages involved in developing an evaluation system, from articulating a Theory of Change, documenting the approach, creating an evaluation plan, designing tools to collect information, and thinking about how to report and share findings.

Developing our understanding further

The Evaluation Fund project confirmed that carrying out monitoring and evaluation is challenging for service providers – and how valuable it was to lay the groundwork for evaluation. Applications for grants were received from 61 organisations, highlighting the need in the sector for the type of support that the Fund gave.

The limitation of the Evaluation Fund was that its results were scattered through the sector. The evaluation guide and workshop extended its impact, but in its short timescale the Fund aimed only to put the foundations for evaluation in place, not to complete evaluation studies. The question remained as to what can be said more generally about the effectiveness of responses to CSA.

Building on the previous work, we undertook consultations with the sector and desk research to identify areas for further exploration in relation to understanding effectiveness. In particular, we sought to establish whether it would be possible to design a major multi-service evaluation study, and to investigate the elements that would be required to achieve this. The following research questions were identified:

- What are the key elements of practice of CSA services which facilitate success?

- Are these elements different for those who are in or have left care and/or have learning difficulties/disabilities?

- What are the challenges to achieving success?

- How should effectiveness be measured in an evaluation study?

- What are the outcomes considered most important by service users and staff of specialist services?

- Do models of service fall into coherent groups (for example, needs, age bands, type of abuse)?

- Which service models are believed to be showing particular promise and why?

We commissioned the Understanding Effectiveness programme to consider these questions. It comprised a knowledge review; a survey of service providers, to better understand their services and the children and young people they worked with; and additional work to explore the perspectives of children and young people with learning difficulties or experience of being in care (since these groups appear to be at increased risk of CSA, and concerns have been raised about the quality of CSA services for them).

2. Learning from the Understanding Effectiveness programme

This section draws out key insights from across the three studies within the programme:

The **knowledge review** (Report 1) was undertaken by DMSS Research in partnership with the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University, between July and December 2018. It involved four phases of work:

- a rapid review of the literature, to highlight what published evidence does and does not tell us about service provision, and to establish what evaluations had already been conducted

- 'key informant' interviews with 13 individuals identified for their practice and research experience and expertise

- three focus groups bringing together practitioners, policymakers and commissioners

- site visits to 12 CSA services across England and Wales, incorporating interviews with managers, staff and young people who used the services.

The **survey of service providers** (Report 2) gathered information from 50 organisations that were:

- providing specific support to children and young people at risk of CSA or having experienced CSA, or

- specifically targeting CSA, including child sexual exploitation, sometimes alongside wider services.

It asked them about the type of services they delivered, the children and young people they worked with, the aspects of service delivery that they considered to be most effective, the challenges they faced and the way they evaluated their services.

The **perspectives of service users with learning difficulties or experience of care** (Report 3) were gathered by researchers from Coventry University. They interviewed 10 young people with learning difficulties and a further 10 young people with experience of being in care; all had accessed CSA support services, and were recruited by the providers of those services for this research.

Availability of support for children and young people who have been sexually abused

- **There is a general shortage of services responding to CSA** – most organisations taking part in the survey of service providers said that demand exceeded their capacity, while the knowledge review suggested that the number of general CSA services had declined in recent years.

- **Young people with learning difficulties or experience of care may not be able to access appropriate services**, because other services do not know where to refer them for support or do not pick up on their need for support.

- **Support needs to be offered flexibly and for longer.** More than a third of organisations said they usually worked with their service users for less than six months. However, children and young people stressed the importance of flexible support that was available when they needed it and for as long as they needed it, while recognising that they may not be able to engage consistently with this support as their lives and recovery are complex.

Effective practice in supporting children and young people who have been sexually abused

- **The relationship between child and practitioner, and the need for continuity, are vital** – and especially for looked-after children and those with learning difficulties.

- **It takes time for children and young people to develop trust**, particularly when they have had previous negative experiences of services. They need to feel believed in, and be given opportunities for choice and control.

- **Support needs to be sensitive to, and flexible in responding to, intersectional needs**.[2] It is essential to think beyond stereotypes of victims and open up services to all; this involves reaching out to engage groups who are less readily referred, and developing skills to work with those with learning difficulties, for example.

- **It is important that services understand the complexity of children's lives** and provide support that can assist with a wide range of areas of life, as well as a range of interventions that are appropriate to age and situation. Services need to be particularly aware of the complexity of life for young people in care and the possible impact of multiple traumas.

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2   Intersectionality is "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*).

‣ **Services need to create a space in which children and young people feel safe and welcome**. This involves using ways of working that are power-, inequality- and trauma-informed, so they feel valued, empowered and listened to. For children and young people with experience of care, and those with learning difficulties, it is particularly important that they know they can talk openly to their practitioner about whatever they need to.

‣ **Suitable services to non-abusing parents** are essential to children's safety and recovery. These appear often to be lacking, inconsistent or not specifically commissioned, but respondents to both the knowledge review and the survey of service providers identified them as important.

Challenges in providing support for children and young people who have been sexually abused

‣ **Service providers highlighted the difficulties they frequently encountered when working with other agencies** which did not always appear to understand the needs of the children and young people they were supporting, or were unable to offer sufficient support. A perceived lack of joined-up working and information-sharing made effective multi-agency working difficult.

‣ **Engaging young people** and overcoming mistrust of professionals could also be challenging when young people had had negative experiences of other services.

‣ **Engagement needs to be supported** by parents, carers and other adults in the lives of children and young people. This was often missing for those in care, while the knowledge review identified the engagement of parents or carers as one of main barriers to achieving positive outcomes for younger children.

Measuring effectiveness – valued outcomes and service models

‣ **Services responding to CSA are diverse and therefore must have tailored outcomes frameworks**. Where children may be still being abused, it is not suitable to focus on 'recovery' outcomes.

‣ **It was not possible to identify a 'core model'** for this group of services, although there are shared principles across the sector.

‣ **There may be ways to think about grouping services** – the knowledge review proposed six types of services, distinguishing between work with victims and survivors of different ages, and between CSA generally and child sexual exploitation (CSE) specifically.

‣ **Meaningful evaluation should focus on measuring what matters to young victims and survivors** of CSA – their perspectives should inform what is considered effective and what counts as success.

‣ **A focus on outcomes measurement is particularly challenging** to this group of services, because there has been harm and recovery can be complex. Each child's journey will be different. A focus on clarifying the characteristics of quality for this group of services, which includes processes to seek views from service users, should perhaps come first.

Sustainability

‣ **A lack of funding** was identified by half of respondents to the survey of service providers, who felt that the pressure to raise funds continually was a drain on their resources.

‣ **More research and evidence of good practice in the field is needed** to support service development, particularly in terms of a better understanding of the issues for children and young people with learning difficulties.

3. Next steps

In commissioning the three studies that constitute the Understanding Effectiveness programme, we aimed to investigate whether there was a 'core' model of service that could be identified as sufficiently consistent, and delivered to sufficient scale, to be studied in a good-quality evaluation. This section sets out what the studies told us about the desirability and feasibility of such a study, and looks at how we might take forward our work on the effectiveness of services.

Should a large-scale evaluation be conducted?

The first step appeared to be to define more clearly what **elements of practice** are identified by key players as effective, both for general groups of children and for specific groups such as those with learning difficulties and looked-after children. We also hoped to identify **core outcomes** that might be meaningful for a range of services.

The studies answered these questions well, but they did not identify a way in which we could undertake the major evaluation study that we had envisaged. Our own time-limited funding and its scale are key practical impediments, but it is not clear that, even with more time and resources, such a study would be feasible.

There is no model of practice being consistently delivered by a large number of services, and there is considerable diversity between services: specialist CSE services are generally very different from post-abuse therapy services in their approach, for example, and it is difficult to see how both groups could be included in a single evaluation. The knowledge review concludes:

> 'Given the range of services, their different approaches and ways of working, and the limited evaluation of most of them, it is not possible to specify models [that are showing particular promise], and indeed many of our research participants warned against this.'

The survey of service providers reinforced this finding and echoed the findings from previous surveys which illustrated the diversity and limited scale of services.[3]

There do appear, however, to be clusters of services and some features of success that are widely shared. Furthermore, there appears to be a reasonable degree of consensus about the core outcomes that are important, from the points of view of both staff and service users.

Additional concerns highlighted by the Understanding Effectiveness programme will need to be taken account of in any evaluation work going forward:

Changing landscape

There is a shortage of services responding to CSA, and they exist within a rapidly changing landscape. A serious risk for any evaluation in this field, particularly one which aimed to achieve a longitudinal dimension, is that some services would either cease to exist or would be reshaped into something quite different during the evaluation period.

It would be necessary for both the services and the evaluation study to be funded stably enough to follow up children and young people from start to finish and even beyond the finish of the study. The CSA Centre does not fund any services itself, and has only limited research resources.

How to add value

It is important to remember that a UK randomised control trial has been completed in this field, focusing on psychotherapy for children who have experienced CSA.[4] Although that study did not provide a long-term follow-up of outcomes, any other evaluation in this area would need to be clear about what it was adding to existing evidence.

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3   See *Sexual Abuse and Therapeutic Services for Children and Young People: The Gap between Provision and Need* (Allnock et al, 2009) and *Mapping Therapeutic Services for Sexual Abuse in the UK in 2015* (Allnock et al, 2015).

4   See *Letting the Future In: A Therapeutic Intervention for Children Affected by Sexual Abuse and Their Carers. An Evaluation of Impact and Implementation* (Carpenter et al, 2016).

So what can be done?

Themes emerging from our Understanding Effectiveness programme suggest ways in which this work can be taken forward if the CSA Centre's funding is renewed.

Focusing on specific areas of interest – non-abusing parents

One theme to emerge particularly clearly from the Understanding Effectiveness programme as having been minimally studied to date was the need to understand more about how services respond to non-abusing parents of sexually abused children and young people. Key informants in the knowledge review identified support to parents as being key to the safety and recovery of young people, but many services have no funding to provide such support. Moreover, there has been little work to describe existing responses and identify key themes in an effective response. We hope to develop such a study in 2020/21.

Working with groups of similar services

Within the diversity of types of service provided, it is clear that the group of organisations operating within the Rape Crisis Federation do share key principles and practices. These services account for a significant proportion of the response to CSA, in terms of the numbers of children and young people served. Thus, if resources allow, we believe there would be value in a further study looking specifically at this group of services.

In addition, there has been very little evaluation of services that offer support across the life-course and are 'holistic' in their approach (i.e. offering therapy and advocacy, one-to-one and group work under the same service umbrella). Equally, many of the existing services supporting young people affected by CSE appear to have a similar model of work and similar outcomes (as identified through the survey). However, some of these services seem to be undergoing changes in focus – such as extending their remit to complex safeguarding – so the CSA Centre would need to be confident that there was sufficient stability within this cluster to enable some common evaluation work to be pursued.

Developing a longitudinal study

Among experts and practitioners in the sector, there is a great deal of interest in a substantial longitudinal study that would follow children and young people for a considerable time after they receive a service responding to their sexual abuse. Such a study could give a deeper understanding of the trajectories of children and young people after this experience, and could shed light on which elements of support given are seen as helpful or unhelpful by service users, with the benefit of hindsight.

There would be considerable challenges (including ethical challenges) in tracking and re-contacting service users over a period of years, but it is possible that these could be overcome. Substantial specific research funding would be needed to provide sufficient stability for the undertaking of such a study.

Putting children, young people and families at the centre

Services raised concerns that evaluation activities often focus more on what matters to organisations (and funders) rather than what matters to young victims and survivors. There was a strong call from practitioners and young people themselves to put children and young people's perspectives at the heart of research and evaluation. Our studies have brought together some young people's perspectives, including on outcomes that are relevant for them – but there is space for more such study, including a focus on lesser-heard groups such as black, Asian and minority ethnic and LGBT+ young people.

Appendix: Findings from the research

1. Knowledge Review

Availability

The focus of child protection appears to have shifted from child sexual abuse (CSA) in general towards child sexual exploitation (CSE) in particular – and while specialist CSE services have developed, the number of general CSA services has declined.

Current commissioning priorities tend to reflect concerns over the criminal exploitation of children and young people (particularly 'county lines'), and over some young people's harmful sexual behaviour as well as their experiences of victimisation.

Features of effective practice

Core elements of effective services included:

‣ providing consistent relationships and establishing trust, so children and young people can feel believed in

‣ addressing the abuse directly

‣ having an empowerment ethos, creating opportunities for choice and control

‣ having ways of working that are power-, inequality- and trauma-informed

‣ being flexible in the frequency and level of contact and utilising a range of activities

‣ supporting non-abusing parents and carers, and providing opportunities for peer support

‣ creating spaces which feel safe and in which children and young people feel welcome

‣ having knowledgeable, skilled and well-supported staff

‣ having minimal waiting times and being able to offer long-term support.

Challenges

Practitioners identified the engagement of parents or carers as a barrier to achieving the most positive outcomes for younger children.

The timing of support and overcoming mistrust of professionals were felt to be the biggest barriers in engaging and supporting older children and young people. Services need the flexibility and resources to be able to spend time building trust, allow for chaotic lives or defer therapy.

Evaluation

Practitioners emphasised the importance of knowing:

‣ what children and young people (and parents) think of services

‣ what the long-term outcomes are for children and young people who have used services

‣ what works for specific groups of children and young people

‣ what interventions consist of and how they work

‣ what changes are significant for individual children and young people

‣ not only what does work but what does not.

The review also identified a number of outcomes that were considered important by service users and staff of CSA specialist services:

‣ no longer being abused

‣ not blaming self

‣ being heard and understood

‣ a more positive sense of self

‣ reduced trauma symptoms

‣ more positive coping strategies

‣ positive relationships and friendships

‣ ability to imagine a positive future

‣ confidence to speak out and making decisions

‣ a stable living situation

‣ feeling safe

‣ feeling comfortable in one's own body

‣ playfulness and ease in relation to others.

All the 12 services visited were already undertaking some monitoring and evaluation activities. However, staff in many of them regarded evaluation as something they did because current or potential funders required them to do so. They felt that evaluation tools had been chosen in order to meet external demands rather than because of their value to their service and their clients.

Sustainability

Most of the CSA support services visited were heavily reliant on non-statutory funding (e.g. from Children in Need, the Big Lottery Fund and smaller charitable trusts), with only a small proportion of their activities commissioned by health, criminal justice or social care agencies.

2. Survey of service providers

Availability

Three-quarters of organisations said that demand for their services exceeded their capacity, with many of them saying that children and young people had to wait more than three months to be seen.

While nearly one-third did not place any time restriction on how long they worked with children and young people, more than a third said they usually provided individual support for less than six months.

Features of effective practice

Organisations highlighted the importance of:

‣ providing trauma-informed services that were sensitive to the needs of children and young people

‣ offering a range of interventions that were appropriate to their age and situation, and responsive to their needs, for as long as was needed

‣ being accessible to children and young people in terms of location and timing

‣ having highly skilled staff

‣ close liaison and support from other agencies

‣ including parents and carers.

Challenges

Half of organisations said that a lack of funding was one of the main challenges they encountered in providing their services, and felt that the pressure to continually raise funds was a drain on their resources.

Organisations also described difficulties encountered when working with other agencies which, they felt, often failed to understand or respond appropriately to the needs of the children and young people they were supporting. A lack of information-sharing and joined-up working was considered to be a particular barrier.

Some organisations felt there was a lack of wider services available to support children and young people, such as appropriate placements for looked-after children.

Evaluation

Organisations described a wide range of outcomes for children and young people, including reduced trauma symptoms, improved safety, better mental health and wellbeing, and healthy relationships.

The majority were using electronic case-management systems and/or databases to record service user information.

Four-fifths had systems in place to monitor effectiveness, which included outcomes tools in addition to direct feedback from service users and parents. One-quarter said they followed up service users to look at longer-term outcomes.

Sustainability

Organisations highlighted the need for:

‣ more time and resources to provide direct support for children and young people affected by CSA

‣ more research and evidence of good practice in the field.

3. Perspectives of service users with learning difficulties or experience of care

Availability

The young people interviewed had previously engaged with other services which had not adapted to their additional needs – for example, by ending support without notice (which young people with learning difficulties found particularly difficult) and not providing consistent support.

Some of the young people had self-referred to services; this highlights the need for services to make information accessible.

There was difficulty in identifying young people with learning difficulties and recruiting them for interview, which raises a number of questions. Are such young people not receiving CSA services? Are practitioners in those services not clear about what these terms mean, and about their services' vital relevance to such young people?

Features of effective practice

Both groups of young people highlighted aspects of service delivery that were important to them. These included:

‣ being given clear information about the service, including why they had been been referred.

‣ feeling valued, worthy of support, empowered, cared for and listened to, and feeling that the practitioner was interested in them as a person across all aspects of their life

‣ having someone to talk to who listened without judgement, and who could be talked to about anything the young person wanted so the relationship was about more than just their experiences of abuse

‣ knowing they could talk openly to their practitioner about what they needed to, without fear of those conversations being shared unless there was risk of harm

‣ practitioners being flexible in their approach and visiting them where they felt most comfortable

‣ having access to long-term support, with time to build a trusting relationship so that full engagement and participation was achieved

‣ getting a personalised approach which met their specific needs

‣ being taught strategies for dealing with emotions and keeping safe

‣ understanding that the abuse was not their fault and they were not responsible, including through the use of non-blaming language.

For young people in care, it was important to have a consistent practitioner who:

‣ understood the complexity of their life, the impact of multiple traumas and the importance of attachments made with foster carers

‣ made them feel cared for and nurtured.

Young people with learning difficulties also valued having a consistent practitioner, who would help them to overcome their anxiety around change. Additionally, they valued having:

‣ accessible information, and time and support to process it

‣ a fixed time and place for support, and sufficient notice if the support was due to end

‣ understanding and support in education settings.

Challenges

Young people said that barriers to engaging and receiving support included:

‣ other services being unaware that specialist CSA support services were available, or not knowing what they could offer

‣ referrals being made by professionals who failed to explain where they were being referred to and why, leaving them frightened, anxious and unsure of what to expect

‣ having been let down by other services, professionals and authorities

‣ receiving inappropriate support, or appropriate support at inappropriate times

‣ lack of an inclusive and holistic approach, or an adaptation of the service response, for young people with learning difficulties

‣ lack of understanding, particularly within education, of the trauma experienced by abused young people

‣ being taken into care because of CSA, as this could exacerbate existing trauma and self-blame.

Evaluation

Young people in both groups considered that it was important for services to achieve the following outcomes:

‣ feeling safe and supported

‣ having strategies to deal with emotions

‣ increased confidence, self-worth, self-belief and ability to speak about abuse

‣ more positive relationships with others, including parents and friends

‣ increased knowledge of 'risks'

‣ improved physical and sexual health.

Sustainability

The interviews raised some implications for practice that are relevant to the sustainability of services::

‣ CSA services need to better understand the issues for children and young people with learning difficulties, and reach out to ensure appropriate referrals.

‣ Services should seek to adapt their support to individual needs, taking particular account of how they communicate with young people with learning difficulties.

‣ Co-locating services in multi-agency teams may improve communication and response times to address perpetration of CSA and support for young people.

The reports in the CSA Centre's 'Understanding Effectiveness' series are:

‣ *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.*

Other CSA Centre publications referred to in this briefing paper are:

‣ *The CSA Centre's Evaluation Fund: A reflection* – Rosaline Sullivan and Evelyn Sharples (2018).

‣ *Measuring your effectiveness: A practical guide for services working with children and young people affected by sexual abuse* – Diana Parkinson and Rosaline Sullivan (2019).

All of the above publications are available on our website at: **www.csacentre.org.uk/our-research/effectiveness/**

Barnardo House, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG
E: info@csacentre | 🐦 @csacentre
www.csacentre.org.uk

21265sc19