

Child Sexual Abuse Strategy

What this means in practice

Child sexual abuse often happens behind closed doors and children do not always tell adults what is happening. This strategy helps us notice concerns earlier and respond better. No single service can do this alone. We all share responsibility.



Our Aim

We want to

- Keep children safe
- Help children feel able to talk
- Make sure adults listen and act
- Reduce harm and stop abuse as early as possible



What this means for practitioners

Ask and Notice

- Talk to children about how they are feeling and what is happening in their lives.
- Do not wait for a child to tell us about abuse.
- Look out for changes such as behaviour, emotions, attendance, or sexualised behaviour.

Listen and Believe

- Stay calm and take children seriously.
- Do not judge or show shock.
- Write down the child's own words and how life feels for them.
- Remember: children may tell their story slowly or in parts.

Think about the whole Picture

- Think about the child, their family, and their wider environment.
- Consider who may be causing harm.
- Make sure health needs and medical assessments are considered.
- Harmful sexual behaviour may be a sign that a child has been harmed.

Act Early

- Use the Right Help at the Right Time guidance.
- Share information with other services when you are worried.
- If the police take no further action, safeguarding still continues.
- Use the [Resolution Policy](#) if professionals disagree.

Know where help is

- Use the [Child Sexual Abuse Practice Guidance](#) and Toolkit.
- Get support from specialist services such as NSPCC, Barnardo's, and FearFree.
- Help families understand what support is available.

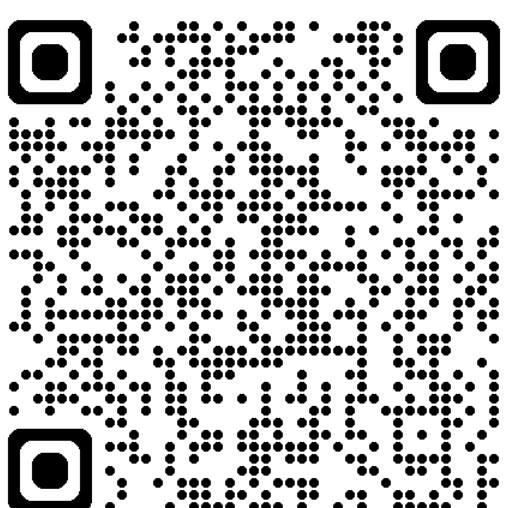
Your Role

You do not need to do everything, but you do need to:



What this means for managers

- Support staff to ask questions and think critically.
- Use supervision to reflect and challenge drift.
- Make sure staff attend Child Sexual Abuse training and use partnership guidance.
- Check that:
 - Children's voices are clearly recorded
 - Decisions are explained and reviewed
 - Child Sexual Abuse risks are not closed too early
- Use learning from audits and feedback to improve practice.



What does good look like

When practice is working well:

- Children feel listened to and believed
- Adults understand what life is like for the child
- Risks are reviewed and managed
- Families know what is happening and where to get help

For more information and resources can be found on the QR code or [SSP - Child Sexual Abuse](#)