



# Supporting children and adults affected by child sexual abuse



# How to use this document



This is an easy read version of: '**National Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Wales (2025 – 2035)**'.



You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

**Website:** [www.gov.wales/national-strategy-preventing-and-responding-child-sexual-abuse](http://www.gov.wales/national-strategy-preventing-and-responding-child-sexual-abuse)

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# Important words and terms



## Child Sexual Abuse

**Child sexual abuse** is when someone does something sexual to or with a child.

Including things like:

- Forcing or tricking a child to do sex acts.
- Touching a child in a sexual way.
- Making a child watch sexual activities.
- Showing a child sexual pictures or videos.
- Asking or making a child act in a sexual way.



## Child Sexual Exploitation

This is when a child is given things in return for:

- doing sexual things,
- or having sexual things done to them.

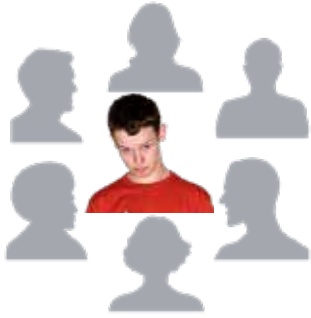


They may be given things like food, gifts, money, or attention. Or they may be hurt, threatened, or scared into doing it.



## Harmful sexual behaviour

Sexual behaviours by children under 18 that are not suitable for their age. It may involve hurting themselves or others.



## Organised network

An **organised network** means 2 or more people who work together to sexually abuse children. This can include:

- Introducing children to others for abuse.
- Trafficking children for **sexual abuse**. Trafficking means taking, keeping and transporting children.
- Getting people to pay for sexual activity with a child.



## Victims or survivors

This means people who were **sexually abused** as children.



## Trauma-informed care

**Trauma** is the lasting impact a harmful experience has on someone.



**Trauma-informed care** is about understanding the impact **trauma** has. We provide care that focuses on what happened to them, not what is wrong with them.

# About this plan



This is a 10-year plan.

The aim of this plan is to support:



- children who have experienced **sexual abuse**,



- and adults who were **sexually abused** as children.

We want to:



- Stop **child sexual abuse** before it happens.



- Give the best support to people at the right time.



- Work together to achieve our goals.



- Check if the plan is working. Improve things where needed.





**We want to know what you think about this plan.**



Please read this document and then answer the questions in the response form.



Please send us your answers by **Wednesday 8 October 2025.**

## Our vision



Vision means what we want this plan to achieve.

We want:



- All children in Wales to be safe from **child sexual abuse**.



- People affected by **child sexual abuse** to get the help and support they need. For as long as they need it.

# How we made this plan



We held events and workshops to hear from people and organisations.



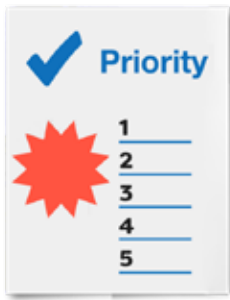
We listened to adults and children and young people affected by **sexual abuse**.



We also based this plan on other important plans and reports, like:

- The [National Action Plan \(2019–2022\)](#) to stop and respond to **child sexual abuse**.
- The [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse \(IICSA\)](#).
- Welsh Government wellbeing goals from 2021–2026.
- [A Healthier Wales](#) – the long-term plan for health and care.
- The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

# Our priorities



These are things we will do so everyone gets the help they need, when they need it.



- We will collect better data about **child sexual abuse**. We will use it to make better decisions.



- We will help people understand how to spot and report **child sexual abuse**.



- We will help people talk about relationships, sex, and **child sexual abuse**.



- We will make sure all services work together and follow the same rules to help children.



- We will help people to deal with **harmful sexual behaviour** in the right way.



- We will create training for all workers who help keep children safe.



- We will help workers report **child sexual abuse** and keep children safe.



- We will fix problems in services that support children, families, and **victims**.



# What we found out

## About child sexual abuse



There are different types of **child sexual abuse**:

- **Sexual abuse** in the family. Most **child sexual abuse** happens at home or by someone the child knows.
- **Sexual abuse** by someone you trust outside the family.
- **Sexual abuse** by groups or **organised networks**.
- **Sexual abuse** by a stranger
- **Child sexual exploitation**. This happens when children are tricked or forced into sexual activity.
- Sibling **sexual abuse** is common and very harmful. This means when one brother or sister sexually abuses another brother or sister.
- Children who show **harmful sexual behaviour** need special support to understand their feelings and needs.



## Preventing and protecting children from sexual abuse



It is important for adults to listen carefully to children. And believe them when they tell their story.



All people who work with children need good training to spot signs of **sexual abuse**. And know how to help and keep children safe.

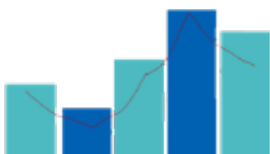
## Support for everyone



We asked the **Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse** to find out what support services were available.



They found 78 services in UK that help people and their families in Wales.



There are more services for children than for adults. There are fewer services for parents of children who have been **sexually abused**.

## Being equal and fair to everyone



Some children are more at risk of **sexual abuse**. This includes children who are:

- **LGBTQ+** - **LGBTQ+** stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and other groups.
- Disabled
- Are very young
- From different ethnic backgrounds



We do not have enough information about some of these children. This makes it harder to help them.



Support services must understand and respect every child's background, age, and needs.



Children who cannot speak or are disabled need extra help to stay safe.

# Our goals



This plan has 4 main goals to help us achieve our vision. They are:

1. Stop **child sexual abuse** from happening.
2. Keep children safe when there are concerns.
3. Help children and families who have been affected by **sexual abuse**.
4. Support adults who were **sexually abused** as children.



We made an action plan for each goal. We also listed people and organisations who will help with this plan.

## Goal 1. Stop **child sexual abuse** from happening



- We want everyone to feel safe. We want people to be able to talk about **child sexual abuse**. We want to raise awareness and support people



- People should know how to keep children safe and how to report abuse.



- Communities should be supported to spot the signs of **child sexual abuse** and report their concerns.



- People who **abuse** children, or think about doing so, should get the right help to stop them from causing harm.



## Actions:



- Raise awareness about **child sexual abuse**.



- Have resources in 1 place so they are easy to find. Make them in different formats and languages so everyone in Wales can understand.



- Share clear information about **child sexual abuse** and relationships.



- Help communities feel confident talking about and reporting **child sexual abuse**.



- Hold events about keeping children safe and stopping **sexual abuse**.



- Ask children and young people how to make homes, parks, schools, and clubs safer.



- Help people who have thoughts of abusing children, so they don't cause harm.



- Help young people change **harmful sexual behaviours**.



- Work with groups across Wales to stop violence.



- Create communities where people know how to support those who have been through difficult experiences.



- Tell parents and carers where to get help.



- Make sure children know how to get support if they feel unsafe.

## Goal 2. Keep children safe when there are concerns



- All workers get training about **child sexual abuse**.



- Parents and carers get help quickly.



- Different agencies work together in the same way across Wales.



- Professionals can get expert advice to help them support children, families, and **victims**.



- Children and young people feel safe to say if they are sexually abused or feel unsafe.

## Actions:



- Check if the rules about reporting **child sexual abuse** are working well.



- Improve guidance for workers on all types of **child sexual abuse** and how to spot risks.



- Work with Safeguarding Boards to make sure all agencies work together across Wales.



- Make sure professionals can find resources easily.





- Look at setting up expert groups across Wales to help with **child sexual abuse** cases.



- Help children and young people feel safe to report **sexual abuse**.



- Update and share new guidance to help protect children.

### Goal 3. Help children and families who have been affected by abuse



- All children and young people who are sexually abused get the help they need, when they need it.



- Everyone who works with children should know how to give the right help at the right time.



- Families and carers have access to support to meet their needs.

## Actions:



- Check what support we already have



- Make sure children can get specialist counselling when they need it.



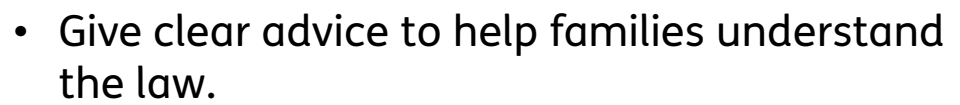
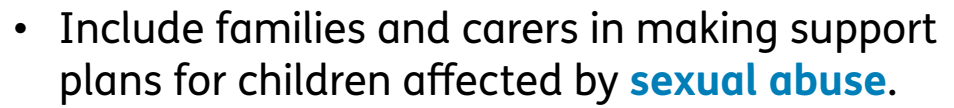
- Let people know about the help available, like what charities can do.



- Make sure everyone who works with children has the right training.



- Ask workers to use **trauma-informed care**.



## Goal 4. Support adults who were sexually abused as children



- We want adults to feel safe to talk about **sexual abuse** they experienced as children.



- Young people who have been abused should get support as they grow into adults.



- Services should give the right help at the right time.



## Actions:



- Help adults who were sexually abused as children feel safe to share their stories.



- We want all professionals to understand the long-term effects of **child sexual abuse**.



- Make sure young people's needs are included in plans and services.



- Young people aged 18 to 25 can access care such as mental health.



- Adults must have access to counselling and support.



- Make support services easier to find.



- Tell people how voluntary organisations can support people.



- Make it clear what adult social care must do to support adult **victims**.



- Make sure people who showed **harmful sexual behaviour** as children get the right help as they become adults.



- Write clear guidance to help councils support adult **victims**.

# Other goals

## 1.Keep information about child sexual abuse



Keep a set of important information about **child sexual abuse** in Wales.



This information will help us check if this plan is working well.



It will also help us decide where to focus our time, money, and support.

## 2. Develop a system where everyone involved works together across Wales



In the first year of this plan, we will set up 2 action groups.



1 group will create a way of responding to **child sexual abuse** that happens everywhere across Wales.



The other group will develop a national training programme.

# Organisations and people who will help with these goals:



- Welsh Government teams like online safety and modern slavery teams and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs).

- Community leaders



- Local community services

- Charity groups and other voluntary groups



- Organisations like health services, children's social care, education and police

- Regional Safeguarding Boards

- National Independent Safeguarding Board



- Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board

- Groups who give or arrange support services

# Working together



Over the next 10 years, we will work with others. This includes Welsh Government, UK Government, and other organisations.



Groups that work in crime and justice can help through a special advisory group.



New laws, like the Online Safety Act 2023, protect children from online **abuse**.



We want schools to support families and care for children's well-being.



Childcare workers spend a lot of time with children. They can help keep children safe by building trust.



Rules for childcare and play have been updated to make sure children are protected.



Children who face hard times are more at risk of **sexual abuse**. The **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Hub** helps people learn about this and find ways to protect children.



Our Mental Health Strategy makes sure everyone can get help, no matter where they go first.



The Child Poverty Strategy 2024 aims to link our national policies, and action plans. The aim is to help children and families get out of poverty and be safer.



Youth Justice is run by the UK Government. The aim is to stop children from going to court and help them avoid crime.



# What happens next



After the final plan is ready, a group will be set up. This group is called the **Strategic Implementation group**.



The group will make an action plan. They will check how well the plan is working.



They will manage smaller groups. These groups will focus on training, collecting data, and helping **victims**.



They will write a report every year.



They will also set up advisory groups. These groups will include adult **victims** and young people.



A team from Welsh Government will help all the groups. They will make sure things run smoothly.



The groups will work together to use resources well.



The plan will be checked every 3 years. After 9 years, we will do a full review.