



**Number: WG50617**

Welsh Government

## Consultation - Summary of Responses

# Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse 2026 – 2036

December 2026

## Overview

This document provides a summary of responses to the Welsh Government's between 14 July and 8 October 2025 regarding the ten-year strategy for Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse.

### Action Required

This document is for information only.

### Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

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### Additional copies

This summary of response and copies of all the consultation documentation are published in electronic form only and can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website.

Link to the consultation documentation: [Consultation on the national strategy for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse 2025 to 2035 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

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# Section 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

The Welsh Government published a National Action Plan to Respond to Child Sexual Abuse in 2019.

In 2022 a Delivery Report was published setting out what had been achieved under the National Action Plan and provided recommendations for continued and future actions.

The recommendations included:

- Continuing to raise awareness and change attitudes to child sexual abuse
- Developing national pathways for children and young people who have been involved in harmful sexual behaviour
- Supporting consistent corporate safeguarding approaches across Wales
- Assuring the information for children and young people is shared in the places and spaces they use, including online/via social media
- Developing and sustaining ongoing learning for the multi-agency workforce
- Monitor the impact of practice tools in improving identification of and evidence about the nature and prevalence of child sexual abuse in Wales
- Complete the mapping of therapeutic services across Wales
- Widely promote information for adult survivors of child sexual abuse, including information for children coming up to the age of 18 years
- The need to develop consistent and accurate data collection on child sexual abuse.

The recommendations for further work were incorporated into the draft ten-year strategy for Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse, this also extended to include adult victim-survivors of child sexual abuse. The draft strategy was subject to a formal public consultation between 14 July 2025 and 8 October 2025.

### The context and rationale

Full details of the context and rationale for this consultation can be found within the main consultation document, available here [Consultation on the national strategy for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse 2025 to 2035 | GOV.WALES](#).

The draft ten-year strategy, vision, strategic objectives and priority actions were developed during the pre-engagement phase with key stakeholders including adult victim-survivors.

The Welsh Government's strategic vision for this strategy is:

*"All children in Wales live their lives free from the harm of child sexual abuse and all those affected by child sexual abuse are protected and supported across their lifespan."*

The strategy adopts a whole system approach to address child sexual abuse, and this includes prevention, identification, response, collaboration and monitoring and evaluation.

The strategy covers individuals impacted by any form of child sexual abuse, from birth throughout their entire life.

The strategy outlines priority actions recommended by stakeholders, aiming for the greatest immediate impact on practices related to child sexual abuse. While not exhaustive, these actions are considered the most effective by those engaged.

This is not a hierarchical list; all the priority actions are of equal importance:

1. Improve the collection, reporting and analysis of child sexual abuse data and use it to inform policy and practice.
2. Raise awareness with children, families and communities, about how to identify and report concerns about child sexual abuse.
3. Encourage open conversations about healthy relationships, sexuality, sexual health, and sexual abuse among children, parents, carers, communities, and professionals.
4. Ensure the multiagency response to child sexual abuse is supported by robust evidence, is child centred and consistent across Wales by implementing a national pathway for child sexual abuse.
5. Raise awareness of and provide training on the national pathway for proportionate responses to harmful sexual behaviour that was developed under the original National Action Plan.
6. Develop and implement a child sexual abuse training framework in line with the groups explained in the National Safeguarding Training Standards developed by Social Care Wales (SCW).
7. Support practitioners from all organisations to identify child sexual abuse, feel confident to report concerns and those with safeguarding roles to assess and manage risk effectively.
8. Address the challenges faced by services that provide specialist and non-specialist support for children, families and adult victim survivors to ensure people affected by child sexual abuse can access the right support at the right time for them.

The strategy presents the Welsh Government's vision, along with the supporting evidence and the strategic goals and key actions selected.

The four strategic objectives are:

- preventing child sexual abuse
- protecting children when there are concerns identified about child sexual abuse (the multi-agency response)
- supporting children and families who are affected by child sexual abuse
- supporting adult victim-survivors of child sexual abuse

### **Background to the Consultation.**

The consultation on the draft ten-year Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse included the publication of supporting draft impact assessments, as well as an Easy Read version and Children and Young People's version of the strategy. The full text of the consultation is available at:

[Consultation on the national strategy for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse 2025 to 2035 | GOV.WALES.](#)

A 12-week consultation was undertaken between 14 July and 8 October 2025.

An online consultation form was available, and this could also be submitted via email and hard copy. A consultation form was also developed to accompany the Easy Read version and Children and Young People's version of the strategy and shared with stakeholders.

The Minister for Children and Social Care announced the consultation in a written statement on 16 July 2025 - [Written Statement: Launch of the consultation on the ten-year draft strategy for Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse 2025-2035 \(16 July 2025\) | GOV.WALES](#)

Additionally, notification of the consultation was sent via email to a range of stakeholders and those who work under the served groups. These were, as follows:

- Barnardos Cymru
- Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Board
- Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse
- Directors of Social Services
- Gwent Safeguarding Board
- Learning Disability Wales
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation
- Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board
- National Independent Safeguarding Board

- National Safeguarding Service, Public Health Wales
- New Pathways
- North Wales Safeguarding Board
- NSPCC Cymru
- Policing in Wales
- Survivors Trust
- Welsh Women's Aid
- West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board

Key stakeholders were encouraged to share with their networks to increase its reach.

### **Consultation responses**

The Welsh Government received **96** responses to this consultation. **8** responses were from individuals, and **65** responses were on behalf of organisations, with the remainder of respondents not specifying. The organisations who responded (and did not specify they wished to remain anonymous) are listed in Appendix A of this report.

## Section 2: Summary of Consultation Responses

We asked respondents nine questions about the content of the draft strategy and two questions about the strategy and the Welsh Language. A summary of responses has been included under each question.

### **Question 1: To what extent do you agree that to address child sexual abuse in Wales we need a ten-year strategy rather than a three-year National Action Plan?**

**84/96** respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that to address child sexual abuse in Wales a ten-year strategy is needed rather than a three-year action plan. **7** respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and one respondent did not respond. **4** respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal.

#### **Summary of responses**

A high number of consultation responses reflected input from key stakeholders and showed strong cross-sector backing for a 10-year strategy to address child sexual abuse in Wales, instead of a shorter three-year plan. Stakeholders such as the Marie Collins Foundation Lived Experience Group, Estyn, NSPCC Cymru, and the Senedd Cross-Party Group for Child Sexual Abuse emphasised that achieving lasting cultural and systemic change requires a long-term commitment.

A decade-long strategy was considered, by most respondents, to be vital for effective prevention, stability, collaboration, workforce growth, and thorough evaluation. Most respondents recommend flexibility with regular reviews to address new risks and propose a rolling three-year delivery plan within the 10-year framework to set milestones and quickly adapt to emerging challenges.

Some respondents also emphasised that accountability should be maintained through robust regular reporting, including biannual updates to Ministers.

A clear theme across the responses from almost all respondents, was securing long-term sustainable funding for third sector providers to support services to children, families and victim-survivors.

A small number of respondents proposed that the 10-year strategy should be placed on a statutory footing to ensure clarity and continuity across political cycles. These respondents felt this would provide a stable foundation for long-term planning and implementation, regardless of changes in government priorities.



Most respondents emphasised that clear milestones and deliverables must be included in the strategy to enable effective progress tracking and timely course correction. They felt that having benchmarks will help maintain accountability and ensure that the strategy remains on track.

Another theme that arose from the responses was the resourcing of the strategy. Almost all respondents emphasised that delivery plans should be well-resourced and reflect the realities faced by local authorities and third-sector organisations. They felt that adequate resourcing is essential for practical implementation and to avoid placing undue strain on partners.

A high number of respondents expressed the need for strong multi-agency collaboration and a whole-system approach to ensure that all stakeholders work together effectively. They believe that this integrated approach will maximise impact and reduce duplication of effort.

Most respondents emphasised the need for cross party and government support, including prioritising funding and holding all parties to account for delivery. One respondent commented, *“failure to do so runs the risk of not only failing to make progress in tackling child sexual abuse but also risks retraumatising victims through promises not delivered”*.

Another respondent commented, *“the draft strategy states that the financial situation in Welsh public services is challenging however, there is evidence to show the major return in investment in long-term funding in terms of the impact on the criminal justice, health and education system”*.

A small number of respondents commented on the format of the document asking that it be more clearly structured, with the vision, priorities, and actions presented upfront, followed by supporting evidence in subsequent sections. They felt this would make the document accessible and easy to navigate for all stakeholders.

## **Welsh Government response**

The final strategy document will set out the legislation underpinning the strategy and include an accompanying delivery plan for statutory organisations. While third sector and private organisations do not have equivalent legal duties, the Welsh Government expects these organisations to embed safeguarding for children and adults at risk within their strategies, policies, and practices. This strategy is an extension of this expectation.

We proposed a rolling three-year delivery plan to sit beneath the strategy, providing the detailed actions stakeholders have requested. The first three-year delivery plan

will be published alongside the final strategy and reflect the priorities identified by key stakeholders.

Planning for the next strategic cycle will begin early, supported by built-in monitoring and evaluation activities throughout the first three years. This approach will continue for the lifetime of the strategy, with formal planning for the next cycle commencing in Year 7, allowing a three-year lead-in period.

This strategy is being developed during a period of significant financial constraints nationally and across all sectors. Therefore, we have adopted a pragmatic approach: prioritising activities, maximising existing resources within Welsh Government and across sectors, and being realistic about what can be delivered.

Delivery plans will focus on agreed priorities. The first set of priorities has already been identified by stakeholders. Future priorities will be informed by monitoring and evaluation, and shaped through the delivery structure, including the children and young people's advisory group, victim-survivors advisory group, and workstream groups. These priorities will be considered and agreed by the multi-agency Strategic Implementation Group and reflected in subsequent delivery plans.

Each delivery plan will be cross-referenced with other Welsh Government strategies and action plans to ensure alignment, capture all relevant activity, and optimising the use of resources for tackling specific issues.

We are not starting from scratch. For example, a substantial range of advice and information resources on child sexual abuse was developed under the original National Action Plan. These resources need to be reviewed for relevance, centralised for accessibility, and assessed for gaps and priority topics before developing new materials. Similar actions will ensure we use existing resources effectively.

As delivery progresses, monitoring and evaluation may highlight the need for additional funding or reconfiguration of existing resources based on emerging evidence.

**Question 2: To what extent do you agree with Welsh Government's vision? - All children in Wales live their lives free from the harm of child sexual abuse and all those affected by child sexual abuse are protected and supported across the lifespan**

**91/96** respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the Welsh Government's vision as stated in the draft strategy. **3** respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and one respondent did not respond. **1** respondent disagreed with the stated vision.

## Summary of responses

Most respondents strongly endorsed the Welsh Government's vision that '*all children in Wales should live their lives free from the harm of child sexual abuse and that all individuals affected by such abuse are protected and supported throughout their lifespan*'.

The same respondents emphasised several key requirements to realise this vision:

- The provision of ongoing, tailored support extending into adulthood, acknowledging the enduring impact of abuse and the necessity of trusted relationships.
- Enhanced training for carers and professionals, ensuring they possess the requisite skills and knowledge to respond effectively and sensitively.
- Improved mental health support following safeguarding interventions, addressing the complex psychological needs of those affected.

The "*Across the lifespan*" framing was widely welcomed by almost all respondents, to recognise adult victim-survivors and the potential long-term consequences of abuse. Most respondents also commended the comprehensive scope of "*all those affected*", which encompasses victim-survivors, families, communities, and professionals. They reflected that such inclusive framing was considered instrumental in enabling a whole-system, trauma-informed response.

Two respondents observed that the vision, while laudable, may be perceived as overly aspirational. Recommendations from these respondents included strengthening commitments by:

- Empowering individuals affected by abuse to challenge harmful behaviours and disclose concerns.
- Engaging with and learning from individuals who offend, which was regarded as essential for prevention and protection.

Most respondents highlighted the importance of robust delivery plans, incorporating clear, actionable steps and subject to regular review to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. They felt that ongoing evaluation will be critical to identifying areas for improvement and maintaining progress.

The provision of trauma-informed support by appropriately trained professionals was highlighted by most respondents as essential to address complex needs, foster resilience, and mitigate the risk of reoffending or further harm.

Most respondents underscored the necessity of adopting a whole-system, multi-agency approach to prevention and protection. Effective collaboration across sectors will ensure a unified response and the sustainability of interventions.

### **Welsh Government response**

We firmly believe that the vision for this strategy should remain ambitious and aspirational. While we have carefully considered the feedback provided by respondents, it is our view that the current vision appropriately reflects the long-term outcome we seek to achieve.

We acknowledge the importance of the additional points raised, particularly the commitment to empowerment and the need to learn from individuals who offend. However, rather than incorporating these into the vision—which should remain a concise, high-level statement of intent—we propose that these elements be translated into specific actions within the first three-year delivery plan. This approach will allow us to set out detailed activities aimed at empowering children, families, and adult victim-survivors, as well as activities to engage with individuals who have sexual thoughts about children and/or have been convicted of sexual offences against children.

The strategy outlines the development of a whole-system, multi-agency approach to prevention and protection, which is articulated in the introduction and embedded within the strategic objectives.

### **Question 3: To what extent do you agree with the priority actions identified?**

**82/96** respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the Welsh Government's priority actions as outlined in the draft strategy. **5** respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and one respondent did not respond. **8** respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the priority actions.

### **Summary of responses**

There was strong and widespread support among respondents for the priority actions identified during the engagement with key stakeholders to develop the strategy. Feedback from most respondents consistently highlighted the importance of trauma-informed, collaborative, multi-agency approaches and the empowerment of individuals with lived experience.

Many respondents considered the co-production of training initiatives with individuals who have experienced abuse was a critical component, ensuring that lived experience informs practice and enhances relevance.

Some respondents emphasised the need to embed intersectional perspectives within all educational programmes to address diverse experiences and promote equity. This applies both to professional and volunteer training and to lessons for children and young people as part of personal and social development within education settings.

Several respondents advocated for comprehensive education for young people on healthy relationships, consent, and online safety, integrated within Personal and Social Education in schools, also calling for robust training and support for educators delivering these sessions. While these respondents agreed that children and young people should be taught to recognise signs of abuse and neglect, a small number of these respondents also stressed that the responsibility for safeguarding must remain with adults.

Expanding and embedding access to trauma-informed psychological therapies within broader mental health frameworks was considered essential by one respondent, whilst many respondents suggested that provision must be available across Wales to ensure timely and appropriate support for those affected by trauma.

A high proportion of respondents strongly emphasised that robust evidence is vital for continuous improvement, accountability, and the development of effective services.

There was support from a high number of respondents for the development of a child sexual abuse training framework, however, some of these responses urged integration with existing safeguarding frameworks and consideration of sector-specific impacts, particularly within education.

Most respondents recommended inclusive and consistent awareness campaigns to raise understanding, challenge stigma, and promote engagement with support services.

There was a clear view from several respondents that initiatives such as the Pathway for Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse Hubs should be piloted prior to national rollout. These respondents felt that this phased approach would ensure that developments are informed by real-world practice and local context.

## **Welsh Government response**

The Trauma-Informed Framework, launched in July 2022, provides a coherent approach to embedding trauma-informed practices across Wales. It recognises the profound impact of trauma on individuals and communities and seeks to ensure the best possible support for those affected. The Framework is inclusive of all age

groups—from children to older adults—and emphasises the importance of understanding and addressing trauma in diverse contexts.

Developed through a collaborative process involving professionals and individuals with lived experience, and supported by the Welsh Government, the Framework will underpin all aspects of this strategy. Policy colleagues working in this area will form part of the internal policy advisory group we are establishing. Furthermore, a trauma-informed approach will be integrated into the training framework for professionals and volunteers. Welsh Government's [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035](#) also promotes embedding a trauma informed approach across all services on the front line.

Two priority actions identified during stakeholder engagement are:

- Developing a core data set to improve understanding of prevalence and inform service development.
- Creating a multi-agency training framework for child sexual abuse, ensuring consistent, role-appropriate training for professionals and volunteers.

We are committed to implementing a multi-agency child sexual abuse training framework that provides ongoing training tailored to roles. This will include guidance on recognising indicators of abuse, reporting concerns to relevant agencies, and responding to children and families in a trauma-informed manner.

Our strategy acknowledges the need to strengthen data collection and analysis to establish a robust evidence base. As part of the proposed delivery structure, we will convene a task and finish group to map existing data and data collection mechanisms, identify gaps, and work with key stakeholders and Welsh Government colleagues to refine a comprehensive data set.

Feedback from stakeholders regarding the development of therapeutic services will be shared with relevant colleagues within and beyond Welsh Government. The internal policy advisory group will include representatives from mental health, Traumatic Stress Wales, and the Trauma-Informed Framework.

Another priority identified by stakeholders is raising public awareness. We have committed to delivering a national awareness-raising campaign on child sexual abuse, complemented by ongoing community engagement and the dissemination and development of accessible information and advice resources.

#### **Question 4: Please can you tell us about any other evidence you think we need to consider for the final version of the strategy?**

Many respondents commended the victim-centred approach and some of the respondents emphasised the need for a stronger focus on primary prevention.

Several respondents expressed concern that the strategy places disproportionate emphasis on responding to abuse after it has occurred, rather than proactively preventing harm.

Some respondents advocated for the development of comprehensive educational programmes for children, parents, and professionals. These respondents felt programmes should address the sociological drivers of abuse and embed early intervention as a core safeguarding principle.

Some respondents highlighted insufficient attention to perpetrator behaviour and the underlying drivers of offending, and some respondents called for dedicated research and interventions addressing the predominance of male perpetrators, alongside the development of rehabilitation programmes and preventative pathways for individuals at risk of offending.

#### **Respondents' suggestions for further research included:**

- Effective approaches to teaching children, parents, and caregivers about abuse prevention, including age-appropriate sex and relationships education, communication about body autonomy, and vigilance around unsupervised contact.
- Ongoing evidence gathering to ensure an effective response to rapidly evolving Technology-Assisted Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (TACSEA).
- The long-term outcomes for children and families once risk is reduced.
- The root causes and drivers of abuse, with specific attention to gendered offending, including research into social norms, male dominance, and links to wider violence prevention strategies (e.g., Violence Against Women and Girls).
- Effective offender-focused interventions.
- The experiences of children with multiple vulnerabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, cultural or faith backgrounds) and barriers to accessing support.

#### **Welsh Government response**

Additional evidence that has been suggested to us by several respondents is being reviewed and considered for inclusion in the final strategy document. The inclusion of research will be balanced with the need for the document to be accessible.

Several respondents also suggested the need for further research to be undertaken on aspects of child sexual abuse, and these are listed above. They will be considered by the Strategic Implementation Group once it has been established for further consideration and prioritisation.

We have considered the other comments provided in this section and will be amending the sections on 'prevention' in the strategy and the delivery plan to incorporate the suggested changes from a few of the respondents.

### **Question 5: The strategic objectives are as follows:**

- Preventing child sexual abuse
- Protecting children when there are concerns identified about child sexual abuse (the multi-agency response)
- Supporting children and families who are affected by child sexual abuse
- Supporting adult victim-survivors of child sexual abuse

### **To what extent do you agree these objectives are the right ones:**

**85/96** respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed strategic objectives. **5** respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and **2** respondents did not respond. **4** respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed requirements.

### **If you have answered disagree or strongly disagree, please can you explain why and suggest any other objectives for us to consider**

A high number of respondents expressed support for the four strategic objectives to tackle child sexual abuse: prevention, protection, support for children, young people and families affected, and support for adult victim-survivors. These objectives were widely regarded by these respondents as appropriate, comprehensive, and forming a robust foundation for a national strategy. There was consensus amongst these responses that the strategy reflects a whole-system approach.

However, several respondents recommended a clearer distinction between the final two objectives—supporting children and families affected by child sexual abuse and supporting adult victim-survivors. These respondents considered that greater clarity was considered essential to avoid overlap and ensure targeted delivery.

Most respondents felt that Technology-Assisted Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (TACSEA) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) among children and young people should be explicitly addressed within the strategy. Some of these respondents also



advocated that trauma-informed, welfare-led responses rather than punitive measures, should be used in cases of harmful sexual behaviour between young people; prioritising support and rehabilitation for those at risk of causing harm.

Many respondents stressed the importance of timely, specialist, and independent support—particularly for non-abusing family members—and urged the adoption of evidence-based, trauma-informed practice with equitable access for marginalised groups.

Sibling sexual abuse and the need to use whole family approaches was raised by several respondents who also raised concerns about the rise in peer-to-peer sexual abuse and exploitation.

The development of child sexual abuse hubs was supported by many respondents. They advocated that these hubs could act as centres of excellence locally/regionally, facilitate joint planning, training and service delivery, support and co-ordinate the delivery of the strategy, informed by local perspectives.

Ongoing consultation and survivor involvement were viewed by nearly all respondents as critical to ensuring services remain responsive and effective.

A few respondents recommended a more engaging and visual presentation of the strategy to clarify links between aims, outcomes, and actions. Moving beyond table-based formats was seen as key to enhancing accessibility and stakeholder engagement.

### **Welsh Government response**

We have carefully considered these views and agree that Strategic Objectives 3 and 4 require greater clarity to ensure their respective remits are explicit. This refinement will be reflected in the final version of the strategy and the accompanying delivery plan.

The strategy includes dedicated sections on Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) and Technology-Assisted Child Sexual Abuse (TACSA), outlining actions to address these issues, including embedding whole-family, trauma-informed approaches. We agree that both areas must feature prominently in the final strategy. However, we recognise the need to balance the inclusion of evidence with accessibility. To achieve this, the strategy will include a reference section in the appendices, enabling readers to access further information if they wish.

A multi-agency partnership approach is fundamental to achieving our strategic vision and objectives. Local authorities and their partners—including health, police,

probation, and third sector service providers—are central to this effort. This collaborative approach is embedded throughout the strategy.

As part of the prevention workstream, we have identified the importance of engaging with individuals who have sexual thoughts about children and/or have been convicted of sexual offences against children. Prevention is not solely about stopping abuse before it occurs; it also involves preventing escalation and reducing the risk of further harm.

Baroness Casey's [National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse - GOV.UK](#) highlighted the need for further research into the motivations of those who offend—a point echoed by respondents to this consultation. Welsh Government is working with the Home Office to implement the recommendation that *“the government should commission research into the drivers for group-based child sexual exploitation, including online offending, cultural factors, and the role of the group.”* While this research will focus on group-based exploitation, it will provide valuable insights to inform our approach to this form of sexual harm in Wales.

We have committed to establishing a Children and Young People's Advisory Group and an Adult Victim-Survivors Advisory Group to support delivery of the strategy. These groups will not be passive recipients of professional proposals; rather, they will play an active role in the design, delivery, and evaluation of the strategy. In addition, third sector organisations supporting children, families, and adult victim-survivors have established advisory groups of their own, which will form part of a wider network of lived-experience advisors.

We will amend the layout of the strategy to reflect feedback on simplifying links and improving accessibility. The delivery plan will provide the detailed actions, responsibilities, and timescales requested by a high number of respondents.

**Question 6: Do you think the actions we have outlined under each of the strategic objectives will help us achieve our overall vision – ‘All children in Wales will live a life free from the harm of child sexual abuse and all those affected by child sexual abuse will be protected and supported across the lifespan.’**

**69/96** respondents agreed with the actions outlined under each of the strategic objectives, **13** disagreed and **14** didn't know whether they agreed or replied with not applicable.

**If you have answered no to question 6, do you have any suggestions for actions that you think should be added?**

Many respondents emphasised the importance of a joined-up approach to prevention, ensuring that the strategy is fully integrated with wider policies on poverty reduction and mental health to address the root causes of abuse. Two respondents called for the full implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act across all government departments to embed long-term, sustainable change.

The establishment of multi-agency hubs and practice forums was recommended by most respondents, to facilitate the sharing of best practice, strengthen collaboration, and reduce regional disparities in service provision.

Early and meaningful engagement with children and young people was considered vital by many respondents, alongside the provision of specialist support for non-abusing parents and caregivers to promote resilience and recovery.

Many respondents highlighted the need for robust, disaggregated data sets and evidence-based action as critical for effective implementation. The same respondents called for swift action informed by current research and inquiry outcomes, including taking proactive measures to help those at risk of causing harm to children, ensuring support services are easily accessible, and launching public awareness efforts to combat stigma and promote understanding.

Most respondents expect the strategy to address online risks, including grooming and emerging threats such as AI-generated content, and models such as the Child's House/Barnahus were suggested as examples of best practice that should be considered for adoption in Wales by a few respondents.

The contribution of third sector and faith-based organisations was strongly emphasised, by many respondents, who called for sustainable funding and formal recognition of their role in prevention, support, and recovery.

A small number of respondents supported the implementation of recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), including the establishment of a National Child Protection Agency and mandating duties to report abuse on individuals, alongside the existing organisational duty to report in Wales.

### **Question 7: Are the key partners listed in each strategic objective section the right partners for the actions?**

**54/96** respondents agreed that the key partners listed in each strategic objective sections are the right partners for the key actions, **23** disagreed and **19** didn't know whether they agreed or replied with not applicable.

**If you have answered no, what other partners should be included?**

Most respondents welcomed the commitment to support adult victim-survivors and acknowledge the potential lifelong impact of abuse. Feedback from most respondents highlighted the critical importance of adequate funding, particularly for specialist support services to ensure that proposed actions can be delivered effectively.

Many respondents noted the already complex landscape of partnerships and multi-agency groups operating at national and regional levels. They urged Welsh Government to consider these existing structures when establishing the delivery framework, ensuring appropriate representation, clear lines of communication, and recognition of the value these groups bring.

Some respondents raised capacity of staff and services as a concern, including whether professionals have sufficient time and resources for additional training given current staffing and funding levels.

A few respondents noted the importance of approaching victim-survivor involvement with care, highlighting the need to ensure participation is voluntary and supported, and that personal experiences are not shared or used without appropriate safeguards.

The proposed long-term, structured approach, with actions planned for the short, medium, and long term, and the development of a core data set to measure progress, was viewed positively by most respondents.

The inclusion of intersectionality and inclusivity as guiding principles was also welcomed, though some respondents recommended embedding these principles more deeply throughout the strategy.

The importance of the inclusion of all multi-agency partners explicitly was emphasised by some respondents. This included:

- Education (particularly schools – independent and maintained - but also other settings such as colleges)
- Health (including nurses and the role they play in sexual health, schools, health visiting etc.)

## **Welsh Government response**

We will ensure that existing partnership and agency arrangements across Wales are fully considered as we develop the delivery structure for this strategy. Several established multi-agency groups have responded to the consultation, and we will engage with them to establish links, understand their purpose and activities, and

seek their views on how the national structure can be designed to maximise resources, strengthen capacity, and create a clear line of sight from the Minister to the citizen.

We acknowledge that training on child sexual abuse and sexual violence is already provided by various partnerships and agencies. We will work collaboratively with these organisations to develop and implement the training framework, ensuring alignment with existing professional standards and avoiding unnecessary duplication or creating additional burdens. We have already committed to using the Social Care Wales National Safeguarding Training Standards as a foundation for this work.

The purpose of the framework is to ensure that all professionals and volunteers have access to a rolling programme of training on child sexual abuse, equipping them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Training will be tailored to reflect the different roles individuals hold within their organisations, ranging from specialist to non-specialist.

It is essential that child sexual abuse training is consistent in messaging across Wales, grounded in the most up-to-date evidence, and delivered by individuals with specialist knowledge, skills, and experience. Training and embedding ongoing support for the workforce is a critical building block of this strategy.

We are actively engaging with representatives from victim-survivor groups to seek their views on the most appropriate and ethical ways to involve adult victim-survivors in Wales and to establish an advisory group. We recognise that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to engagement and that participation must always be voluntary, with individuals sharing only what they feel comfortable disclosing. All Welsh Government activity is informed and underpinned by a rights-based approach.

We also acknowledge the need to provide wraparound support services for victim-survivors of all ages who participate in advisory groups or wider consultation. We will not establish these groups or undertake engagement activities until we are confident that our approach is ethical, rights-based, and supported by appropriate safeguards.

We will ensure that the multi-agency nature of the work is reflected in the final strategy, three-year delivery plan and the delivery structure we develop. We also commit to ensuring that the terms of reference and membership of the delivery structure groups are reviewed annually for the first three years of delivery and then biennially subsequently.

**Question 8: To what extent do you agree that the delivery structure we are proposing will support us to deliver effectively on the strategic objectives and achieve the vision?**

**68/96** respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed delivery structure. **15** respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and three respondents did not respond. **10** respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed requirements.

**If you have answered disagree or strongly disagree, please can you explain why and what you think the structure should look like**

Most respondents expressed strong support for the proposed delivery structure, welcoming the establishment of the Strategic Implementation Group and advisory groups for children, young people, and adult victim-survivors, alongside statutory and third-sector partners. These structures were referenced as essential for ensuring coordinated implementation and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

However, some respondents highlighted the need for greater clarity regarding roles, responsibilities, and powers within these groups. Specific concerns raised by these respondents included governance arrangements, oversight mechanisms, and how training and funding will operate at both national and local levels.

Many respondents emphasised that new structures should complement and integrate with existing arrangements, such as Regional Safeguarding Boards.

Many respondents emphasised a strong expectation that children, young people, victim-survivors, and third-sector organisations should have meaningful involvement in decision-making. These respondents suggested that advisory groups be given formal responsibilities rather than acting solely as consultative bodies. Some of the respondents also highlighted the importance of ensuring safety, support, and empowerment for victim-survivors.

Suggestions from some of these respondents around strengthening the strategy included:

- Improving forensic and medical support for children following assault.
- Clarifying digital safety responsibilities for the technology sector.
- Streamlining governance arrangements.
- Aligning with Welsh Government policies on poverty reduction and mental health.

To address these priorities, many respondents recommended that governance, roles, and accountability mechanisms within the delivery structure be clarified and

streamlined to ensure efficiency and transparency. In their view, a clear framework will reduce duplication and strengthen oversight.

Most respondents expressed cross-sector collaboration should be actively promoted to avoid duplication and ensure alignment with existing safeguarding frameworks and policies.

Some respondents stressed the importance of transparent, regular public monitoring and independent scrutiny to maintain momentum and accountability throughout the 10-year period, building trust and demonstrating progress.

### **Welsh Government response**

We will ensure that existing partnership and agency arrangements across Wales are fully considered as we develop the delivery structure for this strategy. Several established multi-agency groups have responded to the consultation, and we will engage with them to establish links, understand their purpose and activities, and seek their views on how the national structure can be designed to maximise resources, strengthen capacity, and create a clear line of sight from the Minister to the citizen.

We acknowledge that training on child sexual abuse and sexual violence is already provided by various partnerships and agencies. We will work collaboratively with these organisations to develop and implement the training framework, ensuring alignment with existing professional standards and avoiding unnecessary duplication or creating additional burdens. We have already committed to using the Social Care Wales National Safeguarding Training Standards as a foundation for this work.

The purpose of the framework is to ensure that all professionals and volunteers have access to a rolling programme of training on child sexual abuse, equipping them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. Training will be tailored to reflect the different roles individuals hold within their organisations, ranging from specialist to non-specialist.

It is essential that child sexual abuse training is consistent in messaging across Wales, grounded in the most up-to-date evidence, and delivered by individuals with specialist knowledge, skills, and experience. Training and embedding ongoing support for the workforce is a critical building block of this strategy.

We are actively engaging with representatives from victim-survivor groups to seek their views on the most appropriate and ethical ways to involve adult victim-survivors in Wales and to establish an advisory group. We recognise that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to engagement and that participation must always be voluntary,

with individuals sharing only what they feel comfortable disclosing. All Welsh Government activity is informed and underpinned by a rights-based approach.

We also acknowledge the need to provide wraparound support services for victim-survivors of all ages who participate in advisory groups or wider consultation. We will not establish these groups or undertake engagement activities until we are confident that our approach is ethical, rights-based, and supported by appropriate safeguards.

We will ensure that the multi-agency nature of the work is reflected in the final strategy, three-year delivery plan and the delivery structure we develop. We also commit to ensuring that the terms of reference and membership of the delivery structure groups are reviewed annually for the first three years of delivery and then biennially subsequently.

### **Question 9: Are there any other actions we should add to the strategy about equality, diversity and inclusion?**

Some respondents noted that, while the draft strategy references equality, diversity, and inclusion, it requires clearer and more practical steps to embed these principles in action. A key recommendation from these respondents is that the strategy should explicitly recognise how intersecting factors—such as poverty, gender, race, disability, sexuality, and social background—shape individual experiences. Tackling poverty, which disproportionately affects people with protected characteristics, was highlighted as particularly important in efforts to prevent child sexual abuse.

Some respondents emphasised the need for improved data collection and analysis to target support where it is most needed, including for children with disabilities, care-experienced children, LGBTQ+ young people, ethnic minorities, and neurodivergent individuals.

Some respondents expressed a view that all professionals should receive training that promotes cultural competence, trauma-informed practice, and anti-stigma approaches.

Many respondents stressed the importance of reaching groups that are often overlooked and ensuring engagement opportunities are flexible and tailored, particularly for neurodivergent and disabled children.

Most respondents expressed that support should be timely and delivered in the individual's preferred language, with bilingual materials—especially in Welsh—developed in consultation with communities.

Some respondents also highlighted barriers faced by those in remote or rural areas, such as limited transport and digital access. Suggested solutions included mobile



outreach services, local community hubs, and non-digital options to ensure inclusivity.

Some respondents stated that the strategy should explicitly recognise the needs of male victims and other underrepresented groups, ensuring support is tailored for male, trans, and non-binary victim-survivors. A few respondents suggested that provision should also be suitable for all age groups, including adults and older people, acknowledging that the impact of abuse and disclosure patterns evolve over time.

Many respondents stressed the importance of ongoing involvement from a diverse range of voices, particularly children with additional needs and seldom-heard groups, in planning and advisory structures.

A few of the respondents called for the strategy to promote anti-oppressive practice, challenge inequitable power structures, and value the lived experiences of victim-survivors, especially adult victim-survivors, as central to shaping policy and delivery.

### **Welsh Government response**

We have made a clear commitment within the strategy to improve data collection, including how data on protected characteristics is recorded by all agencies and how this information is utilised to inform and shape service delivery.

The strategy recognises that certain groups of children may be at heightened risk of sexual abuse, including disabled children, neurodivergent children, care-experienced children, children who go missing from home or care, and children living in poverty. We have committed to ensuring that the needs of these cohorts are fully considered in the development and implementation of all work under the strategy.

When establishing advisory groups for children and young people and adult victim-survivors, and other forms of engagement we will seek true representation of communities across Wales, including individuals with protected characteristics. Our engagement approach will be adapted to ensure participants are empowered to contribute fully and provided with the necessary support to facilitate meaningful involvement. We recognise that individuals may have multiple protected characteristics, which can compound barriers to accessing services and participating in decision-making, and we will take steps to address these challenges.

The final version of the strategy will explicitly set out the principles of anti-oppressive practice that underpin both the strategy and its delivery plans.

Some faith groups have engaged actively during the consultation process, with several providing formal responses. These groups have expressed a strong commitment to contributing to the delivery of the strategy and the wider safeguarding agenda. They play a vital role in providing activities, education, and support for children, young people, and adults who may be at risk, and their participation in this work is essential.

Equally, under the strategy we have expressed our intention to engage with communities and community groups who play an important role in preventing, identifying, responding to and supporting those affected by child sexual abuse.

### **The Welsh language**

**Question 10: What, in your opinion, would be the likely effects of the strategy on the Welsh language? We are particularly interested in any likely effects on opportunities to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English.**

Not all respondents replied to this question. Those that did equated to around a third of all respondents. These respondents emphasised the need for counselling and support to be accessible in both Welsh and English, though noting that children value trusted, empathetic adults above language barriers. There was strong support from respondents for promoting Welsh through bilingual resources, using standard Welsh phrases, and equal representation in safeguarding and educational materials.

Key suggestions from those who responded to this question include offering bilingual support, ensuring Welsh is an available, not default, option, making resources inclusive for Welsh speakers and stressed parity between Welsh and English, calling for bilingual training, awareness campaigns, and inclusion of Welsh-speaking practitioners.

Some respondents to this question raised challenges such as a shortage of fluent Welsh-speaking professionals and reliance on translation and urged investment in Welsh-language resources and workforce development.

**Question 11: Could the strategy be formulated or changed to strengthen:**

- **It's impact or more positive effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English; or**

- **to mitigate any negative effects on using the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English?**

Not all respondents replied to this question. Those that did equated to around a third of all respondents. These respondents want the strategy to deliver genuine bilingualism, ensuring equal access to information and resources in Welsh and English. They called for regular progress checks, feedback from Welsh-speaking communities, and clear targets for bilingual services.

Key recommendations include:

- All documents, campaigns, training, forums, and services available simultaneously in both languages, using clear, simple language.
- Additional formats such as audio and Braille for accessibility.
- Welsh language needs embedded in planning, with Welsh speakers included in advisory groups.
- Annual reports published bilingually.
- Investment in hiring and training Welsh-speaking staff, with bilingual schedules and resources.
- Welsh-language therapy and support groups, and educational materials available in Welsh from the outset.
- A Welsh Language Impact Assessment for every policy and action.
- Ongoing engagement with Welsh-speaking communities to improve services.

Most of the respondents who replied to this question stressed that communication should reflect different preferences, emotional, factual, or technical and suggested a national survey to inform improvements. They also want practical tools like bilingual online resources and translation features.

The same respondents emphasised that Welsh should be integrated into service design from the start, not just translated, with investment to overcome regional differences and make Welsh a central part of all communication, training, and support.

### **Section 3: Next steps**

The strategy and delivery plan will be published early in 2026, alongside Integrated Impact and Children's Rights Impact Assessments, and accessible versions including Easy Read and BSL.

## **Annex A**

List of respondents who did not wish to remain anonymous.

- Action for Children
- Adult Learning Wales
- APIL
- Barnardos Cymru
- BASW Cymru
- Betsi Cadwallader University Health Board
- British Psychological Society
- Care Inspectorate Wales
- Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Board
- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
- Catholic Bishops of Wales
- Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse
- Children in Wales
- Clybiau Plant Cymru
- Colorado State University
- Conwy County Council
- Cross Party Group on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse
- Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board
- Education Workforce Council
- Estyn
- Gwent Safeguarding Board Child Sexual Abuse Task - multi-agency group comprising Caerphilly, Newport, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire local authorities, Youth Offending Services, Aneurin Bevan Health Board and Gwent Police
- Hywel Dda University Health Board
- Institute of Social Sciences, Sheffield Hallam University
- Learning Disability Wales
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation Action Group Wales
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation
- Marie Collins Foundation
- Mudiad Meithrin
- NASUWT Cymru
- National Independent Safeguarding Board
- National Safeguarding Service, Public Health Wales
- New Pathways
- Nottingham Trent University, psychology department
- NSPCC Cymru
- Pembrokeshire Multi-agency Exploitation subgroup
- Platform

- Policing Wales (Dyfed-Powys OPCC, Dyfed-Powys Police, Gwent OPCC, Gwent Police, North Wales OPCC, North Wales Police, South Wales OPCC, South Wales Police)
- Powys County Council
- ProMo Cymru
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
- Royal College of Psychiatrists Wales
- Scouts Cymru
- Social Care Wales
- Survivors Trust
- The Flying Child CIC
- University of Birmingham
- Violence Against Children
- Wales Safer Communities Network
- Welsh Independent Schools Council
- Welsh Police Forces
- Welsh Women's Aid
- West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board
- WLGA
- We Stand