



Department for Education

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education

16 April 2025

Dear Annie,

I am writing to reiterate my gratitude for your work and leadership of the Child Safeguarding Review Panel's National Review into child sexual abuse within the family environment. You and the review team showed exceptional insight and care in carrying out this work

You will be aware that on 9 April, we published the [progress update on child sexual abuse](#) which includes the government's response to your review. As we have made clear in the Action Plan, this Government is committed to doing everything in its power to prevent the horrors of child sexual abuse, providing the national and local leadership required to tackle offending, protect children from harm, and support victims and survivors. Central to this commitment is honouring the contribution made by thousands of victims and survivors to IICSA by setting out clearly and honestly the steps the Government will take to act on IICSA's recommendations. But at the same time, we must also acknowledge and address the harsh reality that the majority of child sexual abuse continues to be perpetrated within the family environment.

We recognise the need to improve how safeguarding agencies protect and support children at risk of sexual abuse within the family home. We are therefore committed to implementing the seven recommendations for central government set out in your review. In addition to what we have set out in the publication, government will be taking forward the following in regards to each of your recommendations for central government:

- **Recommendation 1:** Government to publish a national strategic plan: – The CSA Action Plan marks how government will drive change on CSA including improving data and updating relevant national guidance to improve consistency in identifying and responding to child sexual abuse.
- **Recommendation 2:** Government should ensure that practitioners and managers have the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to respond to child sexual abuse: – Government will build on existing areas of good practice and guidance (Social Work England's Professional Standards, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Early Years Foundation Stage safeguarding requirements, HMPPS Child Safeguarding and Prison Public Protection Policy Frameworks) to deliver this recommendation. Specifically, DfE will:

- Implement new standards for child and family social work practice, placing greater emphasis on child protection, through delivering a national roll out of a new social work induction programme for all those entering the profession.
 - Develop new standards and training for advanced child protection social work to build expertise and help embed lead child protection practitioner roles
 - Develop specialist child sexual abuse and exploitation training for social workers and other key members of the children's services workforce, including family help workers.
 - Commission two Practice Guides for leaders and practitioners on how to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation and how to support victims.
- **Recommendation 3:** Government needs to support improvements to the quality of joint enquiries to ensure decisions are more consistently in the child's interests: – We are currently legislating for multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs) to strengthen multi-agency working and decision making. Working Together 2023 includes clear guidance on multi-agency child protection expectations and standards, as well as on s47 enquiries and other child protection processes. We will consider any necessary amendments for the next update. We are also delivering the national roll out of family help and child protection reforms from April 2025, supported by guidance which includes expectations around multi-agency leadership, practice and information, including in the child protection system.
 - **Recommendation 4:** Government should ensure there is robust assessment of people presenting risk of sexual harm and who have contact with children: – The Probation Service currently undertakes assessments where the individual is subject to a sentence of the Court. Probation practitioners complete a full risk assessment on all those subject to Probation supervision, using specialist risk predictor tools for people convicted of sexual offences, and this informs a risk management plan. Those released on licence from prison will be subject to the standard licence conditions such as residing as directed and notifying probation if they change their name and restrictions on residing in a property where there are children. All registered sex offenders in the community are managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Under MAPPA, HM Prisons and the Probation Service work closely with the police and a range of other agencies to manage the risks presented by people convicted of sexual offences to protect the public. The Government is also committed to improving multi-agency information sharing, so the right information is shared between all agencies to safeguard children. This includes implementation of a single unique identifier for children (as set out in the manifesto) to 'improve data sharing and stop children and families falling through the cracks'. The Children's Wellbeing and

Schools Bill also includes measures to improve data sharing between agencies to better safeguard and support children and families. This includes an information sharing duty that provides a clear legal basis to share information for the purposes of safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children.

- **Recommendation 5:** Government should ensure practitioners understand they can and should talk directly to children and families about child sexual abuse concerns: - The actions under recommendation 3 will embed this throughout.
- **Recommendation 6:** Government should ensure the health needs of sexually abused children are met: – DHSC will work with NHS England and public health commissioners to develop an audit assessing safeguarding pathways for CSA within relevant health settings.
- **Recommendation 7:** Government should take action to ensure there is a clear and agreed process in place for where cases cannot be considered against the threshold test: - The Ministry of Justice will take forward this recommendation.

The scope and pace of this work will depend on future funding decisions, but we are committed to tackling child sexual abuse and exploitation through our Plan for Change, which will be supported through the national missions on safer streets, breaking down the barriers to opportunity, and building an NHS fit for the future.

Thank you once again for your leadership on this issue. I look forward to working with you and the Panel on this most important area.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Phillipson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

**The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education**