



HM Government

# Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation

Progress Report

February 2017



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## Introduction

### Progress to date

*Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation*, published in March 2015, set out an ambitious programme of work to address on a national scale the failures that we saw in Rotherham and elsewhere that were brought to light by Professor Alexis Jay, Dame Louise Casey and others.

Since the report was published, we have delivered around 90% of our commitments and achieved a step change in the response to child sexual exploitation.

**We have tackled the culture of denial** within professions about the scale and nature of this crime. More victims and survivors of abuse are now being identified and are getting the protection and support that they need. Cultural attitudes have shifted so that victims are no longer being blamed for their abuse.

**We have increased accountability** by strengthening statutory guidance to reduce the risk of children falling through the gaps between services, and reforming local accountability by introducing stronger statutory requirements on police, children's social care and health, so local leaders are more consistently held to account for performance. Evidence from Ofsted shows political will and determination to drive improvements at the local level are now in place and significant investment has been made in the development of services to tackle child sexual exploitation. Local partnerships are now consistently prioritising child sexual exploitation and are empowered to radically improve their practice.

**We have increased the support available to victims and survivors of sexual abuse**, providing local commissioners with the funding they need to support the particular needs of survivors in their area, as well as holding a central fund so that organisations working nationally with survivors are supported. This increased level will be maintained in the coming year because we know that the demand on survivor support services continues. We are also providing funding to pioneering new approaches to wraparound support for child victims of sexual abuse.

**We have sharpened the law enforcement response and brought more offenders to justice**, including offenders who have been exploiting new methods and technologies to abuse children. In the year to December 2015, 5,879 offenders were convicted of child sexual abuse offences (including image offences). This was over 1,000 more offenders convicted than in 2014. 51% of those convicted in 2015 were sentenced to immediate custody.

Key achievements include:

- **£14m of additional funding for direct support for victims and survivors of sexual abuse** between 2015 and 2017. We are also **investing £7.15m over the next two years to bring the pioneering 'Child House' model of wraparound support** for victims of child sexual abuse to England. We will provide further funding over three financial years from the Social Care Innovation Programme to NHS England to support the children's social care contribution to the development and evaluation of the child house model.
- **Around 100 additional Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) prosecutors and managers have been recruited** to manage the increasing caseload of all sexual offences,

including child sexual abuse cases. In the last year there was a 19% increase in the number of offenders convicted of a child sexual abuse related offence.<sup>1</sup>

- **Delivery of a series of five thematic joint targeted area inspections by Ofsted, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC)** of local agencies' performance in protecting children and young people from child sexual exploitation. These inspections have helped to identify common threads across local authority areas and ensure that effective multi-agency working is recognised as the foundation for success. The findings of these inspections have been published and are being used to inform the work of the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse and the Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit.
- **£7.5m of funding for the new national Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.** This ground-breaking centre is independent of government and will be an authoritative source of information, research, innovation, and best practice on tackling this crime.
- **A new Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit** launched in July 2016 which is supporting professionals from all sectors with concerns about child sexual exploitation. The Unit has already delivered local area reviews of practice as well as operational support in live cases.
- **A new whistle-blowing helpline run by the NSPCC** gives all employees an alternative, confidential and swift route to raise any concerns they may have about a child, or their organisation's ability to deal with a concern about child abuse or neglect. Since its launch in February 2016, the helpline has managed over 200 whistle-blowing calls and made 89 formal referrals to either children's social care services or another statutory agency.
- **A large scale communications campaign – *Together, we can tackle child abuse*** – to raise awareness and encourage the public to report child abuse and neglect.
- **Additional funding of £10m to the National Crime Agency's (NCA) Child Exploitation & Online Protection (CEOP) Command to nearly double their investigative capability.** In addition, the establishment of a joint operations cell between the NCA and the UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) is targeting the most technologically sophisticated offenders.
- **A revised definition of child sexual exploitation and targeted guidance and training,** which will ensure professionals have a shared understanding of what child sexual exploitation is and how best to work together to tackle it.
- **Advice for schools and colleges on sexting,** developed with a number of partners in the UK Council for Child Internet Safety Education Sub Group, which sets out how to safeguard young people with regards to sexting and how to respond to incidents of sexting.

## Signs of success

- **24% increase in recording of contact child sexual abuse offences by the police (2015/16 figures compared to 2014/15, a 130% increase from 2011/12).**

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Justice. (2016). A further breakdown of the criminal justice system statistics quarterly: December 2015, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2015>

- **14 % increase in volume of defendants prosecuted and 19% increase in volume of offenders convicted for child sexual abuse-related offences** (in the year to December 2015, compared with the previous year).
- In the first four months of operation the **new whistle-blowing helpline made more than double the number of referrals than the NSPCC** made in the whole of 2015.
- **The NCA has developed new technological capabilities to identify and safeguard children:** a new victim identification suite with access to the Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) has been established to locate victims. In 2015/16 UK law enforcement **identified over 450 victims from abuse images – more than double the number of any previous year.**
- **While the *Together, we can tackle child abuse* campaign was running,** traffic to the GOV.UK page, where people can find their local children’s social care telephone number, **increased almost tenfold compared with the same period the previous year.**
- Google reported **an eight-fold reduction in search traffic for child sexual abuse material over an 18 month period.**

These successes come on top of the **significant investment we are making to overhaul and improve our public services through major reform programmes**, including:

- Through the new Police Transformation Fund, we are already providing an unparalleled opportunity for the police to not only increase their capability to undertake digital investigations, but also to provide new and more professional training to address vulnerability, enhance their intelligence and prevention capability, and improve the response to victims. £175m<sup>2</sup> will be available to police in 2017/18 to continue to incentivise and facilitate transformation in policing, including in the area of safeguarding vulnerable children.
- Fundamental reform to realise our vision for excellent children’s social care: overhauling social worker education, training and development; improving systems and frontline social work practice; and making changes to accountability and governance. We are investing £200m over the next four years to drive innovation and improvement of social care practice, through inspiring and imaginative programmes to overhaul services for vulnerable children and young people. This builds on the £100m first round of Innovation Programme funding, which launched over 50 projects to radically change the way in which vulnerable families are supported and vital help delivered to children and young people.
- Modernisation of court services to create a more proportionate justice system, improve victims’ experience, and save public money. We will invest over £700m to fully digitise the courts and create a more modern estate. This huge investment in technology will improve the efficiency of criminal proceedings, reducing duplication between criminal justice agencies and unnecessary attendance at court.
- £1.3 billion over the next four years on fundamental reforms which will increase our prison system’s ability to rehabilitate criminals and prevent reoffending.

This investment offers extensive opportunities to improve the capacity of our police, children’s social care and criminal justice systems to intervene early to prevent abuse from happening in the first place, as well as bringing offenders to justice and providing support to victims. We will ensure these opportunities are taken.

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<sup>2</sup> This includes £32m already allocated to uplift armed policing capability and current Police Innovation Fund projects.

## Next steps

Over the next three years, we will concentrate our efforts on working hard before abuse takes place to deter potential offenders, as well as improving resilience in children and young people. Where sexual exploitation and abuse occur we will, through an efficient and effective criminal justice system and children's social care system, ensure we have the right response in place to tackle it head on. We will improve early identification and the first response to children at risk, not least through the significant investment being made to bring better trained social workers into the children's social care system, and giving them the right knowledge and skills for the challenging work they do. We will continue to elevate and amplify the voice of the victim so it is heard clearly across every profession and every sector. In doing so, we are committed to extending our programme of work. Future key deliverables include:

- **Investing an additional £20m** over the spending review period **to maintain the NCA-CEOP Command's investigative capability.**
- **Investing £8m to transform policing** to ensure children are better protected now and in the future through: the introduction and development of more specialist capability, including the pilot of a **groundbreaking licence to practice approach** which will ensure that only specifically qualified officers will carry out child sexual abuse investigations; and dedicated police resources to enhance the intelligence picture and implement preventative approaches.
- **Continuing investment of an additional £7m in 2017/18**, on top of core funding of £7m the Ministry of Justice provides to sexual abuse services such as rape support centres, **to support victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.** We will also explore options for the remainder of the spending review period to give providers longer term security in providing support.
- **An update to the 2011 cross-government missing people strategy**, setting out the Government's approach to preventing people from going missing, improving the response for those that do and understanding more thoroughly the often complex reasons for missing episodes.
- **A National Missing Persons Register** which will allow police to access data about missing people across force boundaries. This means that officers will be able to take appropriate action when they encounter a missing person who is away from his or her home force area.
- **A more efficient criminal justice system process** which tackles the causes of delay between a child sexual abuse offence being reported and a decision being taken on whether to charge.
- **Investing £2.2m in the Disrespect NoBody campaign** which educates young people in respectful and safe behaviour and how to access support and has shown to change behaviour – 34% of teenagers surveyed claimed they would be more likely to change the way they behave in relationships, and 74% claimed they would be more confident in challenging abusive behaviour in their friendship group. We will also deliver a second phase of the *Together, we can tackle child abuse* campaign to encourage members of the public to report child abuse and neglect.
- **Full national roll out of video recording of all vulnerable and intimidated witness cross-examination** to improve the experience of the criminal justice system for children and vulnerable witnesses.

- Through the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse and the Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit we will:
  - **build on research into harmful sexual behaviours** to better identify those who may be at risk of offending;
  - **seek to develop data-led approaches to identify those most at risk of offending** so we can intervene early to prevent them doing so;
  - **build an evidence base of what works to tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse;**
  - **disseminate best practice on prevention and identification of victims and potential victims.**
- **Develop a model for children and young people to build a positive and genuine trusted relationship with a professional in their life**, chosen by the child, to encourage them to have the confidence to recognise or disclose their experiences.
- **Launch the revised Department of Health *You're Welcome* standards** which will support early identification of child sexual exploitation through young people's health and wellbeing services.
- **Develop a framework for better connecting commissioning and delivery of prevention and therapeutic support services** for children and adult victims of childhood sexual abuse. We will also publish a mental health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment toolkit to assist local leaders in commissioning services including those which support children and young people who are being abused or who are at risk of abuse.
- **Introduce sensitive routine enquiry of adverse childhood experiences** to increase the opportunity for those who are being abused or who are at risk of abuse to disclose their situation and access the support they need.

## What is the scale of the problem?

Despite the best efforts of practitioners working with children and families, we know that some abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse, continues to go undetected. In some cases there has been a lack of awareness of what might constitute abuse, or worse, allegations of deliberate cover-ups or malpractice.

Our best estimate draws on a NSPCC prevalence study<sup>3</sup> which indicated that roughly **5% of 11–17 year old children (1 in 20)** had ever experienced contact abuse. This equates to approximately **220,000 children or on average, around 50 children in each state-funded secondary school in England and Wales in 2014.**<sup>4</sup> We know, however, that much abuse is not reported: although estimates vary, evidence suggests that only 1 in 10 (10%) of all survivors of childhood sexual assault by rape or penetration (including attempts) told someone in an official position about the abuse at the time, and only 7% report it to the police.<sup>5</sup>

Since Operation Yewtree began in 2012 we have seen **a significant rise in the reporting and recording of contact child sexual abuse to the police.**<sup>6</sup> In the year to March 2016, there was an increase of **24% in recording of contact child sexual abuse offences by the police** (to 41,000 offences) compared with the previous year (up from 33,000 offences)<sup>7</sup> (this increase rises to **137% compared with the year to March 2012**).

More recently, in the year to 31 March 2016, children's services also saw a **3.5% increase in the number of children who became the subject of a child protection plan (CPP) as a result of sexual abuse** (to 2,970 children, up from 2,870 the previous year).<sup>8</sup> This is part of a general increase in the total number of CPPs starting, which increased by 1.8% in the same period.

The year ending March 2016 has seen significant increases in reporting relating to both the sharing of indecent images of children and of contact child sexual abuse. For example, NCA data shows that in 2010 approximately **400 referrals a month** were received from industry alone, in respect of indecent images of children. This had risen to around **1800 referrals a month** by March 2016.

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<sup>3</sup> Radford, L., Corral, S., Bradley, C., Fisher, H., Bassett, C., Howat, N. And Collishaw, S. (2011). Child abuse and neglect in the UK today.

<sup>4</sup> This has been calculated by taking 5% of the number of 11-17 year olds in English state-funded secondary schools (source: DfE School and Pupil numbers 2015) and Welsh maintained secondary schools (source: Welsh School Census 2015) and dividing by the total number of these schools in England & Wales. This requires the strong assumption that rates of abuse are constant across different types of schools, which is unlikely to be the case (no evidence is available on different rates of child sexual abuse victimisation across different school types).

<sup>5</sup> ONS. (2014). Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2013/14. Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/focus-on-violent-crime-and-sexual-offences--2013-14/index.html>

<sup>6</sup> The following set of police recorded offences are grouped to provide a proxy for the number of contact child sexual abuse offences: Abuse of children through prostitution and pornography; Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature; Rape of a female child under 13; Rape of a female child under 16; Rape of a male child under 13; Rape of a male child under 16; Sexual activity involving a child under 13; Sexual activity involving child under 16; Sexual assault on a female child under 13; Sexual assault on a male child under 13; Sexual grooming.

<sup>7</sup> ONS. (2016) Abuse during childhood: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending March 2016. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/abuseduringchildhood/findingsfromtheyearendingmarch2016crimesurveyforenglandandwales>

<sup>8</sup> DfE (2015) Characteristics of children in need: 2014 to 2015.

These increases have been met with rises in the number of **offenders being brought to justice**. In the year to December 2015, 8,593 defendants were prosecuted for child sexual abuse-related offences (including imagery offences), **a rise of 14%** on the year to December 2014 (up from 7,536), and 5,940 were convicted, **an increase of 19%** on the number of convictions in 2014 (up from 4,982).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Justice. (2016). A further breakdown of the criminal justice system statistics quarterly: December 2015, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2015>

## Our Approach

We use the term child sexual exploitation to describe a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

This report focuses on progress against the actions set out in *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation*, in the context of wider government work developed since March 2015 to tackle child sexual abuse.

We have three strategic aims. We are tackling offending, reducing vulnerability and supporting victims and survivors. These aims are set out in more detail below.

### 1. Tackling offending

**We will improve the ability of our government and law enforcement agencies to identify, pursue, investigate and prosecute offenders.**

We will make it more difficult for people to abuse children by empowering law enforcement and other agencies to disrupt their access to the people, places or technology that enable them to start, or go on, abusing. We will take action to prevent or stop sexual abuse and seek ways of enabling potential offenders to change their behaviour.

### 2. Reducing vulnerability

**We will identify and eliminate the conditions that give offenders the opportunity to commit child sexual abuse.**

This includes tackling weaknesses such as within local child protection systems; organisational weaknesses such as failures of accountability and governance; and environmental weaknesses such as the factors that can make town centres and the night-time economy unsafe for children and young people. Reducing vulnerability also means making people – whether professionals, parents, or children – better equipped to understand and address the risk factors that can lead to abuse.

### 3. Supporting victims and survivors

**We will support victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.**

We will work through agencies, commissioners, and service providers to improve access to services for victims and survivors. We will make sure that everyone who comes into contact with a victim recognises how high the stakes are for that individual and responds with appropriate compassion and respect.

Our national programme of work to tackle child sexual abuse, set out in this report, is organised under these three strategic aims. The Home Secretary oversees and drives progress on this work by chairing the **Inter-Ministerial Group on Child Sexual Abuse**. The Group brings together: the Secretaries of State for Education, Justice, Health, and Communities and Local Government; Ministers of State for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism; Vulnerable Children and Families; Internet Safety and Security; Public Health and Innovation; and Sport, Tourism and Heritage; and the Attorney General.

This work does not take place in isolation. Ministers, working with the Chief Social Worker, are driving improvements in our collective response to all forms of child abuse and neglect. The Government published its full **children's social care policy paper** *Putting children first: Delivering our vision for excellent children's social care* on 4 July 2016. This sets out our ambitions for a comprehensive reform programme for children's social care and social work across three key areas: people and leadership; practice and systems; and governance and accountability.

Child sexual exploitation can manifest in many different ways and situations and has clear links to other forms of abuse and exploitation – that is why the actions in this report are supported by a number of other government strategies which address crimes that are often committed in parallel with child sexual exploitation. Our new approach to **Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation** specifically takes action to safeguard gang affected women and girls, who can experience significant harm including sexual violence and exploitation as a result of their association with gang members; and to protect vulnerable locations such as pupil referral units and children's care homes where young people may be targeted for exploitation. The **Modern Slavery Act**, which received Royal Assent on 26 March 2015, gives law enforcement the tools to tackle modern slavery, ensures that perpetrators can receive suitably severe sentences for these appalling crimes and enhances support and protection for victims. Our **Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy** sets out how we will support a transformation in service delivery and a step change in social action to achieve a long term reduction in the prevalence of these terrible crimes. Our approach will benefit all victims of these crimes and break the inter-generational consequences of abuse.

## Objective 1: Tackling Offending

**We have given law enforcement clearer leadership, stronger tools, new technological capabilities, and more resources to identify and disrupt potential offenders and to bring those who do offend to justice.**

Since the *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation* report in March 2015, we have **enhanced police leadership at all levels (national, regional and local)**:

- We have prioritised child sexual abuse as a **national threat in the Strategic Policing Requirement**. Forces must maximise their specialist skills and expertise to prevent and resolve child sexual abuse cases.
- We have funded **Operation Hydrant, the national police operation** to support collaboration between forces on investigations of non-recent abuse involving institutions (843 institutions so far) or people of public prominence (319 people, 157 of whom are from the world of TV, film or radio, and 91 from the political sphere, including local politics). Operation Hydrant also acts as **a centre of learning and best practice** for the police service in relation to cases within its remit. This is vital – the police service has acknowledged its previous mistakes in relation to these cases and is changing its approach.
- We provided £1.5m in 2015/16 to fund a **new network of regional child sexual abuse coordinators and analysts** in Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU), who are supporting forces to **implement the new National Policing Child Sexual Abuse Action Plan** as well as developing a significantly enhanced **local intelligence picture**. This improved intelligence is already helping police forces **act earlier to stop abuse before it happens**.

### Case Study: Regional child sexual abuse coordinators and analysts

Located in each Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), the coordinator and analyst help to develop an enhanced policing response to child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse through improving understanding of the problem and identifying and sharing good practice both within and across regions. The regional coordinators support the delivery of the National Police Chiefs Council child sexual exploitation action plan and have benchmarked each force and ROCU against their delivery of this, developing and/or delivering plans to address key gaps, and improve the regional infrastructure accordingly.

The coordinators are supported by regional analysts who are improving the understanding of the threat picture at a local, regional and national level. For example, the analysts are creating a regional child sexual exploitation problem profile which includes information from over 250 safeguarding partners and pulls together a comprehensive assessment of the key threats and emerging trends to inform related responses. These profiles have been complemented by regional workshops with police and key safeguarding partners to discuss key findings and develop joined up recommendations accordingly.

We have **improved law enforcement capacity and capability**:

- We provided an **additional £10m funding to NCA-CEOP** in 2015/16 to enable the command to target more offenders, strengthen victim identification and create additional

intelligence and child protection advisor capabilities. This has included opening a second child sexual exploitation hub in the North West, eight new specialist teams, and recruiting 174 new dedicated officers to target the most serious child sexual exploitation offenders. Collaborative working between police forces and the NCA is now resulting in around 375 arrests each month for online child sexual exploitation offences, and the safeguarding of around 450 children each month.

### Case Study: Collaborative working between police and the NCA

Richard Huckle, an English school teacher in Malaysia, gained the trust of families and access to their children, whom he then went on to abuse.

NCA-CEOP Command launched an investigation into Huckle after he was identified as producing and uploading indecent images of children (IIOC) on the Internet. He was arrested in December 2014 at Gatwick airport, and following his arrest 20,000 IIOC were found on his computer, as well as a 'how to guide' aimed at other abusers advising them on abusing children.

The NCA-CEOP victim identification team searched and analysed the IIOC for time, date and location information to assist in identifying the children.

Richard Huckle had spent several years integrating himself into the community in which he lived, making himself a trusted figure. He abused that trust in the worst possible way. He deliberately travelled to a part of the world where he thought he could abuse vulnerable children without being caught.

The NCA worked to track down Huckle and end his prolific abuse, using appropriate legislation which allows UK nationals to be prosecuted in the UK for offences that have been committed overseas.

Huckle was subsequently charged with 91 offences, including 14 counts of rape of a child under 13 years old. He pleaded guilty to 71 offences and was sentenced to 22 life sentences; he will serve a minimum term of 23 years in prison.

We have provided **tougher powers and more effective tools to combat child sexual abuse:**

- **The groundbreaking new Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) has been rolled out to all UK police forces** and is transforming the way the police and NCA tackle online abuse. CAID uses the latest technology to transform how we deal with images of child sexual exploitation and abuse. It brings together all the images that the police and NCA come across. The images and their metadata provide law enforcement with vital clues on the identity of victims and offenders associated with them. The use of their unique identifiers – called hashes – reduces the time needed to review evidence from, in one example, three days to an hour, allowing police to identify and protect more victims more quickly than before.

### Case Study: Use of the CAID by West Yorkshire Police

West Yorkshire Police used a forensic tool with the CAID hash set (the unique identifying code for each image of child abuse) to scan a suspect's hard drive. The scan matched 1200 images of abuse on the device against the CAID data within 15 minutes. The suspect was presented with this evidence during the first interview. Previously, it could have taken months to progress the case. The suspect was later convicted and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and required to sign the Sex Offenders' Register for seven years.

West Yorkshire Police – in conjunction with NCA-CEOP – were also able to quickly identify and safeguard a young child who was a victim of child abuse by a close family member. This family member has subsequently been successfully convicted at court and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

- **New police powers** are now in effect, which allow police to **close down establishments** that might be used for sexual activity with a child. Police can also apply for **Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) or Sexual Risk Orders (SROs)** for any individual who poses a risk of sexual harm in the UK or abroad, even if they have never been convicted in the UK or overseas. Between 8 March 2015 and 31 October 2016 a total of 9,091 civil orders to prevent sexual harm were taken out by police forces in England and Wales. Of these, 8,970 were SHPOs and the remaining 121 were SROs.<sup>10</sup>

### Case Study: Sexual Risk Orders

An SRO application was made for a 26 year old man who police were able to link to a number of girls under the age of 18. There was a clear sexual motive behind his association with the girls but there were no complaints enabling a prosecution. All of the girls linked to him were vulnerable by age and circumstance. The police successfully made the case to the judge that the individual was openly targeting a particular type and age of female child and that he posed a risk of sexual harm. A full SRO was granted for an indefinite period, prohibiting him from being with or approaching girls under 18 years.

We have improved how organisations, businesses and communities **spot and tackle offending**:

- We have funded a large scale **communications campaign – Together, we can tackle child abuse – to raise awareness and encourage members of the public to report child abuse and neglect, including child sexual exploitation, to children's social care.** Greater public understanding and more effective reporting means getting the right help to vulnerable children at the right time. The Government paid for advertising, including out-of-home (bus stop and phone kiosk), radio and digital in 33 local authorities. A further 79 local authorities delivered the campaign themselves using centrally produced materials. Over the course of the campaign, page views to the GOV.UK page where members of the public can find their local children's social care telephone number increased by almost ten times compared to the same period the previous year.

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<sup>10</sup> These figures are derived from police management information and have not been rigorously quality assured. They should therefore be treated as approximate.

- We expanded the **English as a second language training programme with an additional £2.07m funding to reach 9,434 new learners**. This training is helping those who are most isolated to access the police and children's services where they have a child safeguarding concern.
- We have provided £250,000 to support 14 projects which aim to enable women in seldom heard communities to recognise and act on the signs of abuse. These projects have reached 2,000 women.

### What else have we done?

In the past year, we have gone even further than the commitments in the March 2015 *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation* report. We have **strengthened the tools available to law enforcement** as follows:

- At the first WePROTECT summit in 2014 the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) committed to working with technology companies to share hashes – digital 'fingerprints' – of indecent images of children. The IWF subsequently shared **almost 19,000 of these hashes – all of which originated from UK law enforcement's CAID – with six major global technology companies, enabling the removal of potentially thousands of images from their platforms and services**. In October 2016, a further 15,750 image hashes were shared between the IWF and those technology companies. We continue to support industry's efforts to remove known indecent imagery of children through the use of hash-sharing and to expand this to video.
- **We launched a joint operations cell between the NCA and GCHQ** to tackle the most technologically advanced serious and organised criminals, including online child sexual exploitation offenders.
- **Specialist law enforcement capabilities, managed by ROCUs, are now being used to address the threat posed by those with a sexual interest in children**. For example, their e-forensics capabilities have been deployed to suspected offenders' home addresses to interrogate digital devices in fast time with the aim of confirming if child sexual abuse has taken place.

And we have gone further in **increasing our ability to bring offenders to justice and prevent reoffending**:

- We have recruited around **100 additional Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) prosecutors** and managers to tackle the increasing caseload of all sexual offences, including child sexual abuse, and reduce the backlog of cases awaiting advice. They have already had a positive impact. In January 2016 there were 546 cases awaiting a charging decision for longer than 28 days (the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) target). By November 2016 this figure was 164 – a reduction of 70%.
- Early consultation between investigators and prosecutors is important in delivering improvements in the timeliness of prosecutions. We have revised the approach to providing Early Investigative Advice (EIA) in RASSO cases and completed three joint police and CPS pilots in Norfolk, South Yorkshire and Nottingham. The CPS is considering how the pilot outcomes can assist in developing an enhanced way of collaborative working in rape and serious sexual offence cases.

- The Police, CPS and the Ministry of Justice are working together to improve the timeliness of cases from offence to charge and the overall timeliness of cases within the criminal justice system. We have introduced mandatory monthly reporting of pre-charge timeliness and volumes.
- We have finished piloting the use of pre-recorded cross examination of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses (which include all child witnesses) and have commenced full national implementation of Section 28 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act. Section 28 provides for cross-examination of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses to happen earlier in the criminal process through digital recording, aiming to improve the quality of evidence provided by such witnesses. This can reduce the trauma of the witness, as they may not have to give their evidence at trial.
- The CPS, law enforcement and judiciary have worked together to **nationally adopt a new streamlined approach to prosecuting some offenders charged with possessing indecent images of children**. The approach uses the CAID to progress cases more quickly by removing the need for investigators to view and grade large numbers of images and by presenting a streamlined forensic report to the court.
- Two innovative approaches for the **supervision of offenders in the community** rolled out to the National Probation Service in the last year are the Active Risk Management System, developed jointly by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the police, which enables offender managers to better tailor activity to prevent reoffending, and 'Maps for Change', a toolkit developed by NOMS for working with low risk sex offenders to reduce reoffending.

## Objective 2: Reducing Vulnerability

**We have addressed weaknesses in the system of local accountability and governance so that failure is not tolerated, tackled a culture of denial across professionals and communities, and supported better and more consistent information sharing and partnership working.**

Since the *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation* report in March 2015, we have **improved multi-agency working and information sharing**:

- We have begun to lay solid foundations for the improvements required in **improving the frontline children's social care response**. These reforms will bring the best people into the profession; give them the right knowledge and skills for the vital work they do; and develop leaders to nurture practice excellence. We have invested in Frontline and Step Up to bring more high calibre recruits into social work.
- We have increased scrutiny of local agencies' joint working arrangements through our **new system of joint targeted area inspections** by Ofsted, the CQC, HMIC and HMIP. The first series of these inspections judged local areas on the ability of their law enforcement, education, and health services to work together to protect and respond to children who are at risk, or suffering as a result of child sexual exploitation, or who are missing from home, school or care. This approach will drive better multi-agency working and help to ensure that no child falls through the gaps between services, and that all agencies are engaged and aware of their child protection responsibilities.
- Five reports have been published, highlighting both good practice and areas for improvement. The first round of joint targeted area inspections ended in summer 2016 and Ofsted published a thematic report on child sexual exploitation in September. We are making sure the findings of this report inform the work of both the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse and the Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit.
- We are making the performance of local agencies more transparent to the communities they serve, by publishing **data from local authorities on the prevalence of child sexual exploitation within social work assessments**.
- We are giving NHS staff the information they need to make a clear assessment of a child's risk of abuse or neglect. NHS England is delivering the **Child Protection – Information Sharing (CP-IS) project**, which links local authority systems **to the NHS summary care record. This flags to healthcare workers** when a child is subject to a child protection plan or is being looked after. The CP-IS project helps the NHS give a higher level of protection to children who present in unscheduled health care settings, including emergency departments, walk-in centres, minor injury units, GP out-of-hours services, ambulance services, maternity and paediatric wards.
- We have delivered, in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing, five **regional road-shows** to strengthen and support information sharing and multi-agency working in local areas. We disseminated the key learning from the road-shows, including advice on barriers and good practice, in a report published in July 2016 – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-vulnerable-children-and-families-information-sharing>.

### Case Study: Multi Agency Working

The Deter team in Lancashire is a multi-agency team consisting of specially trained professionals from police, children's social care, health services and voluntary agencies. It provides packages of support to all young people at significant risk of child sexual exploitation in the county. The NCA-CEOP Command referred the case of a 16 year old girl who had sent and received indecent images from numerous older males over a number of months. A joint visit was undertaken by a detective and social worker to enable a risk assessment to be completed. As a result of the risk assessment, a health assessment was made by a specialist nurse, which in turn led to a referral to the Children's Society outreach worker for support around internet safety and self-esteem. Six sessions were arranged with a specialist nurse to provide advice on healthy eating and exercise.

This intervention has seen a visible increase in the young person's self-confidence and self-worth; increased time spent socialising with age-appropriate peers in the local community; and a significant reduction in internet usage. Her parents have also used professional advice provided by police, health and children's social care in relation to monitoring social media and communicating with the young person. The young person has reported that this package of support has contributed to her success in moving away from child sexual exploitation.

- The **Information Sharing Centre of Excellence** has provided direct support to Local Authorities to share information. The Centre visited a range of local areas to look at how they were developing their multi-agency approaches to safeguarding, information sharing and identifying any barriers to effective working, or examples of good practice. A report of the findings was published in September 2015.<sup>11</sup>
- The CQC has included **child sexual exploitation in their inspection programme** on Looked After Children and Safeguarding. A national report of the collective findings and themes was published in July 2016.<sup>12</sup>

We have **strengthened the accountability, leadership and multi-agency working of local partners, so that failure will not be tolerated:**

- In 2016, Alan Wood CBE undertook a **fundamental review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards** and the Serious Case Review process. The review **considered the effectiveness of current arrangements in holding partners to account**. As a result we are seeking to introduce a stronger statutory framework through the Children and Social Work Bill which will drive greater accountability on the police, local authorities and health service. The outcomes will also drive improvements in strategic multi-agency working at the local level, leading to better protection for all children.
- We have legislated for the recovery of public sector exit payments. This means that, after the regulations come into force, **exit payments to public sector employees and office holders earning £80,000 and above, including council staff, will be clawed back** if they return to the public sector within 12 months. We will also introduce regulations that will cap public sector exit payments at £95,000.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://informationsharing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/P0273-Info-Share-EGVY-report.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/not-seen-not-heard>

- We included a clear statement about the **overarching responsibilities of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (March 2015) for the first time. This highlights the particular role of Director of Children’s Services and Lead Member for Children’s Services** as the key point of professional and political accountability within local authorities. It also sets out the responsibilities of other local agencies, including the police and health services and the professionals within them, in keeping children safe.
- We have introduced a **programme of reforms to improve police integrity and increase public confidence and transparency in the police complaints and discipline systems**. Disciplinary hearings are now held in public and overseen by an independent legally qualified chair. Police officers who are dismissed now have their name held on a ‘struck off’ register so that they cannot join another force. Where corruption is involved, officers can for the first time be prosecuted for a specific offence of police corruption, and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is being expanded to take on all serious and sensitive cases. Last year the IPCC took on almost five times the number of cases it did in 2013/14, when the change programme started.

We have **made environments safer**:

- We have provided £1.24m to establish a **Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit**, which is led by the NWG Network. The Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit, which launched in July 2016, operates independently of government, providing enhanced advice and support for local areas dealing with child sexual exploitation. Its services include:
  - bespoke specialist support, including high-level strategic advice for local areas, and on-the-ground engagement;
  - guidance from practitioners with professional expertise in key safeguarding areas in addition to a register of consultants available to advise on specific approaches;
  - help for local areas to implement existing recommendations from inspections and reports; and
  - an extended out-of-hours helpline and an online knowledge portal offering guided access to over 1000 child sexual exploitation resources for practitioners.

### Case Study: Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit

The new Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit was recently invited by an area in the south east region to conduct a health check on progress made against six recommendations from a county-wide area review; in particular, two critical recommendations regarding information sharing, and training and awareness.

An initial review of documents and intensive two-day programme of one-to-one interviews and focus groups was carried out by the Unit's safeguarding, police, health and education leads. The Unit reported on its findings to strategic leads from across the area. The Unit's recommendations included advice to embed child sexual exploitation training into the county's existing wider safeguarding training programme; that those commissioning child sexual exploitation services, including victims' services, match local provision to need and ensure gaps are identified and addressed to avoid duplication of provision; and that the voice of parents is heard at a strategic level.

The area has begun to adopt these recommendations by reviewing training and by working with agencies to ensure they work together at a strategic level in commissioning services.

The Unit's work built on an already positive relationship with agencies across the area, which will further enhance future engagement.

- To complement the work of the Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit, the Local Government Association has developed a Child Sexual Exploitation Diagnostic Peer Review to provide local authorities and their agencies with a partner authority's view about the effectiveness of current strategic responses and safeguarding practice 'on the ground' including recommendations for improvement.
- We launched a **major public consultation exercise** on 21 July 2016 – seeking views on the possible introduction of new statutory requirements relating to the reporting and acting on child abuse and neglect, including consideration of the possible introduction of **mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect**. The consultation closed on 13 October 2016 and a summary of responses, including recommendations for any new measures, will be presented to Parliament in due course.
- We launched – **in partnership with the NSPCC – a new national whistle-blowing helpline (0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk)** in February 2016, for child abuse and neglect related reports. This now provides all employees with an alternative, **confidential route to speak out if they are concerned that their organisation is not dealing with a safeguarding concern appropriately** or failing to protect children. Since its launch the line **has received 246 calls**, of which 87 were direct whistle-blowing concerns and 37 resulted in a formal referral to children's social services or another statutory agency.
- We have supported local areas to **address weak and ineffective licensing regimes** which leave the public and vulnerable children at risk.

### We are improving the professional response:

- We have consulted on a **revised definition of child sexual exploitation** for all safeguarding professionals which will be included for the first time in the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. This will make sure professionals have a shared understanding of what child sexual exploitation is and how best to work together to tackle it. It will also ensure data collected by local agencies is consistent, helping to build a reliable regional and national picture of the problem, which in turn will support multi-agency working.

#### Child sexual exploitation definition

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

- Through the Children and Social Work Bill, we are seeking to establish a **new, bespoke professional regulator for social workers** that will be known as *Social Work England*. This will protect the health and wellbeing of those vulnerable children, families and adults who need social work support, including victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation. It will work to raise the minimum standards of initial education and training and professional standards, including standards of proficiency and continuous professional development.
- NHS England republished the **NHS Standard Contract** for 2016/17, mandated for use by commissioners for all contracts for healthcare services other than primary care. The provider must ensure that service users are protected from abuse and improper treatment in accordance with the law, and must take appropriate action to respond to any allegation of abuse. Health providers must also **nominate a Child Sexual Exploitation Lead**, and must comply with the requirements and principles in relation to the safeguarding of children and adults, including in relation to deprivation of liberty safeguards, as set out or referred to in Department of Health child sexual exploitation guidance.
- Through the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, we have supported **53 pilot projects to test system reform across children's social care**, including some with a specific focus on tackling child sexual exploitation. The Programme will produce final evaluation reports, thematic reports and case studies, which will help identify which practices have genuinely helped children and young people and embed the learning in frontline practice.

### What else have we done?

We have gone beyond the original set of commitments in the March 2015 report, and taken additional steps to further reduce vulnerability of individuals and environments.

- **We are helping young people change attitudes which can underpin violence against women and girls.** The initial *Disrespect NoBody* advertising campaign followed on from the acclaimed *This is Abuse* campaign which, since 2010, has helped young people understand what a healthy relationship is and to rethink their views of controlling behaviour, violence, abuse, sexual abuse and consent. *Disrespect NoBody* took a different approach to appeal to young people, using puppets voiced by teenagers to communicate key messages in an

engaging way. It is targeted at 12 to 18 year old boys and girls and comprises TV advertising with online digital advertisements, an interactive website ([www.disrespectnobody.co.uk](http://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk)), teachers' pack and blogs.

- **The expanded Troubled Families programme** led by the Department for Communities and Local Government **now explicitly reflects the importance of recognising signs that a child is at risk of being sexually exploited**. The Programme aims to support 400,000 families with multiple, high-cost problems by 2020; the Government has committed £770m to achieve this aim. The expanded programme now **gives local authorities the discretion both to select families for intensive work on the specific basis of safeguarding and potential child sexual exploitation risk**, as well as working with families where other problems are a clear risk factor that may help to uncover child sexual exploitation.

**Case Study: Examples of how the Troubled Families programme is tackling child sexual exploitation at a local level include:**

**Middlesbrough** funds a programme called Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked (VEMT) that identifies families experiencing these problems, and brings them into the Troubled Families programme where the whole family can get help from a dedicated key worker.

**Waltham Forest Council's** Troubled Families programme funds a child sexual exploitation coordinator who is based in the council's multi-agency safeguarding hub and identifies child sexual exploitation cases for additional help. The local programme also funds specialist support for young people at risk of child sexual exploitation. The borough's *Say Something if you See Something* campaign helps the whole community to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation and report it. Troubled Families key workers have also been trained to identify child sexual exploitation in the families they are working with and how to respond.

- We commissioned **research by the Early Intervention Foundation** which showed that there is a lack of good quality research evidence on the indicators of risk of someone becoming a victim or a perpetrator of child sexual exploitation. In response to calls from the sector, the new Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse will help develop better evidence and tools to overcome this issue.
- We have also commissioned a **major thematic review of children and adolescent mental health services** across the country, led by the CQC with assistance from Ofsted – this is the first of its kind.
- **We are leading the global response to online child sexual exploitation**. In November 2015 the UK, in partnership with the United Arab Emirates, brought together governments, companies and civil society organisations in Abu Dhabi for the second WePROTECT Summit. The Summit commitments, agreed by 63 countries and international organisations, including, for the first time, China, contained an agreement on taking coordinated national action against online child sexual exploitation. We have also delivered, through UNICEF, a £10m programme to tackle online child sexual exploitation in 17 countries.
- **We launched the first public strategy of the merged WePROTECT Global Alliance to End Child Sexual Exploitation Online in July 2016**. In this strategy we also launched the Model National Response which is designed to guide countries in developing their own coordinated national response to online child sexual exploitation. We have subsequently launched an enhanced guidance document which will assist countries in assessing their current response and identifying capability gaps; prioritising national efforts to fill gaps; and contributing to wider international understanding and cooperation.

- With UNICEF, we **launched the Fund to End Violence Against Children**, to which the UK is donating £40m over the next four years, to fund projects around the world that will support national action and build the capacity of nations to tackle online child sexual exploitation. The WePROTECT Global Alliance Board will be responsible for advising the Fund on how to prioritise and programme its activities, so as to ensure we make the greatest impact on the crime.
- Global technology companies have made changes to their platforms and services to make it harder to find abusive material. For example, Google reported **an eight-fold reduction in search traffic for child sexual abuse material over an 18 month period**. It has placed prominent warning adverts and links to information pages on search pages associated with child sexual abuse material. Several other companies, including Microsoft, have taken similar steps.
- The easy availability and nature of online pornography is changing the way this generation understands healthy relationships, sex and consent. We have introduced measures in the Digital Economy Bill that will **require all commercial providers of online pornography to have age verification controls** in place to stop under 18s from accessing material. The measures introduce a regime to disrupt the business models of those who are non-compliant, including internet service provider level blocking. The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) has agreed in principle to take on a regulatory role within our proposed framework. We expect the Bill to receive Royal Assent in spring 2017. The focus is to make pornographic content harder for children to access and prevent the potential harms associated with children seeing material that is clearly unsuitable and inappropriate for them.

## Objective 3: Supporting victims and survivors

**We have funded the voluntary sector to deliver support to many more victims and survivors of abuse, improved the experience of victims of sexual abuse who are giving evidence in a criminal case, and invested heavily in improving child and adolescent mental health services.**

Since the *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation* report in March 2015, **we have improved support for victim and survivor services:**

- We have provided a **£7m increase in funding for non-statutory organisations which directly support the victims and survivors of sexual abuse** in 2015/16. We have matched this funding in 2016/17 and will do again in 2017/18, giving an additional £21m in total to this vital work.
- The £7m in 2016/17 included a £1.7m uplift in funding to 84 Ministry of Justice funded female Rape Support Centres (on top of core funding) in recognition of an increased demand for their services, particularly from adult survivors of historic and childhood sexual abuse. £4.7m was allocated to the Police and Crime Commissioners (on top of core funding) to spend on local services for all victims of childhood sexual abuse. £0.6m is being distributed centrally to national organisations combating child sexual abuse. This funding allocation will continue over 2017/18.

### Case Study: The Cyrenians – Changing Lives – Nottingham Project

The Changing Lives project received £61,653 from the £7m increase in 2015/16. It provides therapeutic support and a wraparound service to young people who have been victims of sexual abuse, witnessed unhealthy sexual practices, are at risk of sexual exploitation or have been exploited, and are entering into risky behaviours. The primary age group the project works with is young people between 14 and 25. The project works with schools where there is no provision of support; young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET); the homeless; and Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities). It also takes referrals from schools, social services, police and probation.

The project is also – with consent – using survivor and victims’ case studies to inform the content of a DVD/handbook which it is developing as a toolkit highlighting the issues and the various forms of child sexual exploitation. The toolkit will be provided to schools and other local community groups.

We have driven a more **victim-focused culture among health professionals:**

- We are committed to improving child and adolescent mental health services, which is why we have **invested an additional £1.4bn in Child and Young People’s Mental Health Services (C&YPMHS)** over the course of this Parliament. This will benefit all children who need mental health support, including those who are traumatised by sexual abuse.
- In response to the ambitions set out in the 2015 report of the Children and Young People’s Mental Health Taskforce, *Future in Mind*, we have encouraged Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) working with their partners across health, social care and education, to **transform their local services for children and young people’s mental health**. They have produced local transformation plans (LTPs) which were signed off in December 2015.

Going forward, LTPs have been refreshed and included in Sustainability and Transformation Plans and are therefore part of NHS England's routine assurance process. Local commissioners, whether CCGs, local authorities, Justice Commissioners or schools, hold the responsibility to assess the quality of the services they commission. LTPs also cover the needs of vulnerable children, including those who have been sexually abused. Data on use of mental health services by children and young people began to be collected through the Mental Health Services Data Set in January 2016. This data set will form the basis of measuring access to services for both children and adults.

We have improved the **experience for children and vulnerable or intimidated people in the criminal justice system**:

- We have **doubled the number of registered intermediaries**. There are now around 200 to support children and vulnerable or intimidated witnesses in giving their best evidence at police interviews and in the trial process.
- We have created around 20 **operational live remote link sites across England and Wales**, so that vulnerable witnesses can give evidence away from the courtroom and court building.
- The national rollout of **Section 28 – videoing of cross-examination** – will also improve the experience of the criminal justice system for children and vulnerable witnesses.

#### What else have we done?

We are improving **support for children who have been victims of trafficking**. Trafficking victims are amongst those who are particularly vulnerable to child sexual exploitation:

- In 2014–15 we carried out a trial of **independent child trafficking advocates (ICTAs)** who provided support to trafficked children. On 28 June 2016 the Government announced that it is committed to the full national roll out of ICTAs across England and Wales in due course.
- **We are pressing ahead with the implementation of ICTAs in three early-adopter sites from January 2017**. The Home Office, in collaboration with the Department for Education, will commission a new training programme for existing independent advocates – a statutory provision for all looked after children – which will improve their understanding of the specific needs of trafficked children and how to support them.
- **We have created a Child Trafficking Protection Fund, which will fund local work to improve provision for child victims of trafficking**. The fund has two main aims: firstly, victim support and recovery, which might include specialist care for trafficked children; and secondly, to reduce vulnerability to exploitation, for example by tackling the problem of trafficked children going missing after identification in the UK, and possibly being re-trafficked.

We have **increased funding for rape and sexual abuse crisis care and measures to transform mental health support**:

- NHS England has almost **doubled its investment in Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) services from £9.7m to £16m per annum**. SARCs provide an immediate crisis and medical response to rape and sexual abuse. They also provide their users with a care pathway for therapeutic support to long term recovery. In England, where there are now 47 SARCs, children under 18 years old make up 31% of clients seen, rising to over 50% in some areas. NHS England (London) has funded development of a network of three SARCs in London that are dedicated to seeing children. The Children and Young People's Haven Service provides child friendly environments and skilled support to meet the immediate needs of sexually abused children, including coordination of forensic medical evidence. 250 children were seen in the first six months from April 2016 – a 45% rise compared to the same period the previous year.
- The Prime Minister announced, in January 2017, a comprehensive package of measures to transform mental health support in schools, workplaces and communities.<sup>13</sup> These measures will include the introduction of new support for schools, with every secondary school in the country to be offered mental health first aid training and new trials to look at how to strengthen the links between schools and local NHS mental health staff. In addition, a programme of pilot activity on peer support for children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing is being launched, supported by £1.5 million of funding.

We are **improving the protection and supervision available for girls at risk of child sexual exploitation in children's homes:**

#### **Case Study: St Christopher's Fellowship Safe Steps**

The St Christopher's Fellowship Safe Steps innovation pilot was developed as a **response to an increasing number of young women being identified as sexually exploited, or at risk of sexual exploitation**, for whom concerns about their safety could lead to placement in secure children's homes or homes far from their own area. Safe Steps provides an opportunity for these young women to continue to live locally when this is in their best interest. It is an option that aims to minimise disruption, offer continuity in important areas of life such as education and family ties, and minimise the possibility that they will feel blamed or 'punished' for having been exploited. The pilot is based in two children's homes (Allen House and Pelham House), adapted to offer the highest levels of protection and supervision available within the provisions of the current Children's Homes Regulations. Staff have been trained in a social pedagogy model to work in ways that offer relational security and enable them to take a personalised approach to risk assessment, supervision and safety. The project being located in the community necessitates managing risk differently and depends on trusting and collaborative relationships with commissioners, local authorities, police and other agencies.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-unveils-plans-to-transform-mental-health-support>

## Next steps

The progress set out in this report shows the Government's ongoing commitment to tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse. We have continued to transform the child protection and criminal justice systems, delivering real change by driving a culture change among police, social workers and the NHS, holding local areas to account, and ensuring the highest standards of integrity and accountability among professionals. The Joint Targeted Area Inspections have highlighted the progress that has been made since we published *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation*, but also reminded us that culture change can take time to embed across **all** frontline practitioners. We will continue to drive the message throughout the system.

Child sexual abuse is a global threat and the UK is leading the global response. We are, however, not complacent about progress. Child sexual abuse is a complex crime for which there is no quick fix. Given the clearer picture of the scale of the problem and our deeper understanding and awareness of child sexual abuse and exploitation, we must continue our efforts through the three strategic aims of tackling offending, reducing vulnerability, and supporting victims and survivors.

Over the next three years, we will concentrate our efforts on working hard before the abuse takes place to deter potential offenders as well as improving resilience in children and young people. Where sexual exploitation and abuse does occur we will ensure we have the right response in place to tackle it head on both through an efficient and effective criminal justice system, and through an effective children's social care system which delivers high quality care and support for all vulnerable children.

The best interests of children must be at the heart of every decision made. As announced in *Putting Children First* (July 2016) we are determined to bring about the widest reaching reforms to children's social care and social work in a generation. We are very clear that we want a system staffed and led by the best trained professionals; dynamic and free to innovate in the best interests of children; delivered through a more diverse range of social care organisations with less bureaucracy; smarter checks and balances; and new ways to learn and intervene where services fail. We will create a world class child protection system where the needs of individual children are identified early and they get the help and support they require as soon as possible to keep them safe.

We also want to see a radically transformed police force able to cope with the demands of new and emerging crime types like child sexual exploitation. To do this we need a highly skilled and professional workforce that has the tools, capacity and capability to handle not only the crimes themselves effectively, but also the vulnerable victims they beset. We need to continue to build on the improved trust and public confidence in the police to deal with these crimes, so that victims continue to come forward.

## Objective 1: Tackling Offending

**We will continue our work to transform law enforcement capability to tackle child sexual abuse:**

- We are investing an additional **£20m funding in the NCA** to maintain its capability to identify and target offenders, safeguard children at risk, and enable a more efficient and effective UK law enforcement response to online child sexual exploitation.
- We are continuing **Operation Hydrant** funding (£1.8m in 16/17) to ensure the police have a joined-up approach to investigating cases involving institutions and persons of public prominence. In addition, we are providing a further £513k funding in 2016/17 to cover Operation Hydrant costs for football related child sexual exploitation.
- Through **Police Transformation funding** we will provide a **once in a generation opportunity for police** to transform themselves and invest in new and more efficient capabilities to deal with the threat of child sexual exploitation.
- We will ensure that every officer, from Chiefs through to Constables, are equipped with the **professional knowledge, skills and expertise to respond to child sexual exploitation by funding a package of measures delivered by the College of Policing** to:
  - **transform the frontline response** by training shift supervisors to coach, brief and debrief their officers on child sexual exploitation and wider vulnerability;
  - professionalise the police response to child sexual abuse and raise the status of officers carrying out these challenging roles by piloting a **new licence to practice** for specialist child abuse investigators; and
  - ensure the police are equipped with the skills required to interview vulnerable victims and witnesses by delivering improved training to specialist investigators in **Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interviews**.
- We will ensure the police have an enhanced **understanding of the threat from child sexual exploitation and have a greater focus on prevention**, by:
  - funding a **new network of child sexual exploitation prevention officers** who will work closely with the police and local services to deliver targeted prevention strategies in high risk areas; and
  - continuing funding for a **regional network of police coordinators and analysts** who are implementing the National Policing Child Sexual Abuse Action Plan and developing a significantly enhanced regional and national intelligence picture of the threat of child sexual exploitation.
- We are currently evaluating the results of a recently-concluded pilot run in three force areas to **embed CPS prosecutors in police investigative teams**, where they were able to provide early investigative advice on new child sexual abuse investigations. If there is evidence that the approach increases the efficiency and effectiveness of police investigations through earlier and more charging decisions then we will look to roll it out more widely.
- We will help local areas to make best use of the full range of powers at their disposal by **developing a child sexual exploitation disruption toolkit**. This will set out all the powers available, from civil orders to licensing, to disrupt, deter and tackle offending.

- We know missing children are particularly at risk of sexual exploitation. Working with the National Police Chiefs Council we will develop a **National Missing Persons Register** that will allow the police to access data about missing people, including children, across force boundaries. Data will be made available through the new National Law Enforcement Data service, which is expected to go live in 2018.
- We will **review the powers available to the police** to make sure they have the right tools to tackle offending. We will look at the use of tools, including Child Abduction Warning Notices and Sexual Risk Orders, to create an evidence base for the use of existing interventions and evaluate whether there are gaps in the tools available to the police to disrupt offending at the earliest opportunity.

**We will improve efficiency of the Criminal Justice System:**

- We will work to better understand how we might deal with child sexual abuse cases more effectively across the criminal justice system by conducting an assessment of volumes and flows of individuals through it, and considering how changes in one part of the criminal justice system affect demands and costs in others.
- We will tackle the causes of **delay between a child sexual abuse offence being reported and a decision being taken on whether to charge, by streamlining processes** where possible, including improving the practical **mechanisms for requesting third party material**.

**We are developing proposals to transform our knowledge of offending:**

- We will commission **research from the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse on the motivations of offenders**, building on analysis of the offending history of child sexual abuse offenders. This will help us to better understand how to prevent them from reoffending or offending in the first place.
- We will, through the Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit and the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, **build on research into harmful sexual behaviours by young people** to better identify those who may be at risk of offending in the future.
- Building on this work by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse and the Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit, **we will seek to develop data-led approaches to identify those most at risk of offending**, so that we can intervene early and prevent them from doing so.

**We will continue to be at the forefront of improving the international response to child sexual abuse:**

- We will continue our work with industry to take action against child abuse online, in line with their commitments under the WePROTECT Global Alliance. We will support the work of the Internet Watch Foundation in seeking to increase the number of hashes of known child sexual exploitation material in circulation to ensure its removal from the Internet. And we will seek to go further to take action against live-streamed abuse and online grooming.

## Objective 2: Reducing Vulnerability

### We are developing measures to make environments safer for young people:

- Taxis and private hire vehicles are known to constitute a high-risk environment for young people: both in terms of the risks presented by child sexual exploitation and wider risks to children posed by organised crime groups. Department for Transport, Home Office and Department for Education are working together to **introduce statutory guidance to public authorities who have licensing functions under taxi and private hire vehicle legislation** to better protect children and vulnerable adults from harm.
- Young people transitioning from care at the age of 18 are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. We will **provide ongoing support through a Personal Advisor for care leavers and – through the Children and Social Work Bill – will extend this support to all care leavers up to the age of 25**. Personal Advisors will continue to help the young person access the support they need to live independently. We will also ensure that there are high quality residential and foster placements for looked after children.

### We will prioritise targeted prevention and early intervention to raise awareness and stop abuse before it happens:

- The findings of the Joint Targeted Area Inspections; existing and new Children's Social Care Innovation projects; and the emerging work of the Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit, the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care, will all help **build an evidence base of what works to tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse; what best helps support victims and survivors to recover; and our understanding of emerging challenges**. Working closely with the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, we will look carefully at this evidence when developing future policy. In the short term, we will consider what further action needs to be taken at both local and national level as a result of the Joint Targeted Area Inspections.
- We are **investing £2.2m in the successful *Disrespect NoBody* campaign**, which intervenes early to prevent abuse by educating teenagers on what constitutes respectful and safe behaviour and how to access support if a victim or perpetrator of sexual abuse. Evaluation of the 2016 campaign showed that the adverts successfully increased teenagers' understanding of the issues, including around pressure to send nude texts or pictures. 34% of teenagers surveyed claimed they would be more likely to change the way they behave in relationships after watching the *Disrespect NoBody* adverts. A significant majority of teens agree that the adverts make them feel more confident and likely to take positive action if faced with abusive or disrespectful behaviour. We will reach school children using the campaign teaching material (the *Disrespect NoBody* lesson plan was downloaded 4,500 times at the height of the 2016 campaign) and ensure that messages reach younger and more vulnerable teens through work with partners including: NSPCC, Barnardo's, Women's Aid, Brook, Rape Crisis, the Troubled Families Programme, and CEOP.
- We will **invest £723k in delivering a second phase of the *Together, we can tackle child abuse and neglect***, including child sexual exploitation. Survey findings from the first phase of communications activity showed that it was giving people confidence to report their suspicions. Using evaluation of the impact so far, we will strengthen the campaign, reinforcing the message in order to deliver sustained change.

- Through the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care, we will **consider and disseminate best practice on prevention and identification of victims and potential victims**, strengthening the first response to child sexual exploitation.
- We will **test and learn from the Children's Services Innovation Programme projects specifically focused on targeted support**, including for those who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. Additionally, we will look to use the evaluation of existing projects to develop our response to missing children, who are particularly vulnerable to child sexual exploitation; and consider the most effective high-intensity interventions to support vulnerable young people.
- We want children and young people to be better equipped to staying safe from abuse and exploitation, through education about the importance of healthy relationships and consent. We will fund the delivery of support to help schools make best use of **new materials developed by the PSHE Association** to improve resilience of children and school nursing services.
- We will commission the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse to evaluate local and regional approaches to **helping children and young people understand what a healthy relationship looks like** and highlight the risks of child sexual exploitation including online with a view to disseminating best practice to achieve sustainable cultural change.
- We know that better support for mental health issues can help those who have been abused and/or exploited; better identification of mental health issues has the potential to help with making sure that underlying causes, such as exploitation and abuse, do not go unnoticed. To improve links with schools, DfE and NHS England funded a £3m pilot to improve the knowledge and understanding of mental health issues of school and C&YPMHS staff, through joint training of **single points of contact in mental health services in 255 schools**. This pilot aimed to raise awareness of mental health issues, support early identification of those with difficulties, and highlight potential interventions. The pilot is now being independently evaluated. The report will be available in spring 2017 and will provide an assessment of the pilot design and implementation. The indications are that the pilot had a positive impact on joint working and **we will be extending the pilot to 1200 schools across 20 areas to test further aspects of delivery in 2017/18**. Extension of the single point of contact will benefit all children and young people with mental health issues, including any who are victims of child sexual abuse or exploitation, in the schools and colleges involved. This will be as a result of improved collaborative working between the school and colleges and specialist mental health services.

**We will do more to promote early identification of victims of child sexual abuse and those at risk:**

- We know that children are better protected and supported when the agencies they encounter work well together. We will support local authorities, the police, and health services, to work together and promote the welfare of children and jointly identify and respond to emerging needs and priorities. Following Alan Wood's review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, we are taking forward measures in the Children and Social Work Bill to **introduce a stronger statutory framework, which will introduce greater accountability** on local authorities, police and health services and support them in working together.
- We have, in response to concerns raised in the joint targeted area inspections thematic review, highlighted in government practice guidance the importance of issues such as attendance by key professionals at meetings and case conferences.

- We will further improve information sharing between local agencies, including by looking again at our guidance to examine what more can be done to break down common barriers to sharing information. We will also look to strengthen the forthcoming update of the NHS Confidentiality Code to make it clear when information about vulnerable children and young people should be shared. In addition, we will explore what might be possible in legislation to better enable information about vulnerable children to be shared appropriately between local agencies.
- We will explore messaging on information sharing and include this in the Government response to Dame Fiona Caldicott's report on data security, consent, and opt-outs.
- We know that victims, and potential victims, of child sexual exploitation struggle to successfully access the safeguarding support available from the range of statutory and non-statutory services because they are not well-placed to accept or seek the help on offer. Regular, sustained contact with a professional chosen by the child, gives vulnerable young people the opportunity to build a genuine and positive relationship with a caring adult, and encourages them to have the confidence to recognise or disclose their experiences, by creating a climate of mutual belief and respect. We will improve our understanding of **how children and young people can develop trusting relationships with professionals in their life**, by commissioning development of a model that provides frontline professionals more space and skills to provide emotional support, improve access to safeguarding services, and advocate on behalf of children at risk.
- We will look in detail at how the Troubled Families programme is currently being used to identify and support the families of young people who are victims of or at risk of child sexual exploitation in order to understand what lessons we can learn from this approach.
- We know that children who go missing are at particular risk of child sexual exploitation. We will **launch an updated *Missing Children and Adults Strategy*** which will aim to prevent people going missing and improve our response to those who do. The Strategy will address issues raised in the recent HMIC inspection on the police's response to missing and absent children.
- We are working with professionals to help them identify those at risk of, or suffering, abuse by providing them with **appropriate tools and training to do so**. The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse will identify the effectiveness of the range of risk assessment tools being used in local areas to identify and better support children at risk of, or suffering from, child sexual exploitation. In the longer term they will use this evidence to **develop and disseminate risk assessment tools and invest in training for those who are reported by young people to be a trusted service**, for example school nurses. As this work will take some time to come to fruition and practitioners are seeking support now, the Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit is looking to develop a tool which local areas can use in the interim – this will build on their comprehensive understanding of what works.
- We will make sure that when children do disclose abuse, they are listened to, and supported sensitively and effectively. We have developed, in partnership with The Children's Society, NHS England and Public Health England, **Seen and Heard, a champions' programme** within services to help staff better identify and handle disclosures. We will work across government to explore how this approach can be spread further.
- We will continue to educate school nurses and mental health professionals through the Seen and Heard programme so that they can identify the early signs of exploitation.

- We will support **early identification of child sexual exploitation through young people's health and wellbeing services**. In 2017/18, we will launch revised [You're Welcome](#) standards in young people's health and wellbeing services – quality criteria for young people-friendly health services, setting out principles to help commissioners and service providers to improve the suitability of NHS and non-NHS health services for young people. These will include specific references to child sexual exploitation and abuse which will shortly be tested.
- We will help local leaders to work together to understand and agree the needs of all local people, so that they can commission services which suit those needs, including services which support children and young people who are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse. We will publish a public **mental health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) toolkit** in spring 2017. The toolkit will include data and intelligence on risk and protective factors across life course and will include issues relevant to child sexual exploitation. We are also developing a JSNA support pack which includes key data for planning effective young peoples' substance misuse interventions in 2016–17 and includes commissioning prompts and data on mental health, self harm, domestic violence and child sexual exploitation.
- We will make effective use of public health funding to identify and support those at risk of child sexual exploitation including by **ensuring that all Directors of Public Health have comprehensive awareness and understanding of child sexual exploitation and related vulnerabilities**; and that they identify gaps in evidence and facilitate the sharing of good practice. This will be through publication of a paper to be launched in early 2017 and a dissemination programme across England with the Association of Directors of Public Health.
- We are piloting routine enquiry into adverse childhood experiences, including child sexual abuse, in settings such as sexual health clinics and mental health services that are used by adults and young people who may have experienced adversity, so that they are given the opportunity to disclose earlier and can access the services they need to get their lives back. This will support a data collection on prevalence of child sexual abuse.

### Case Study: Routine Enquiry

Lancashire Care Foundation Trust (LCFT)'s programme on Routine Enquiry about Adversity in Childhood (REACH) identifies children who have been sexually abused or have other needs earlier and supports them to get their lives back. A children's social care referral to the early help team on a breakdown in relationship between a mother and child found the mother had a significant adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) score before reaching 18 years old, including witnessing parental domestic abuse, separation, as well as experiencing emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Exploring this and the intergenerational impact it was having on the family led to a tailored programme of support which enabled the mother to reflect on her experiences of being parented and parenting. In this supported approach, she made positive changes for herself and her family, resulting in improved family relationships and well-being. The REACH programme continues to be a catalyst for more disclosures of child sexual abuse and earlier and more targeted interventions.

**We will ensure that staff are well equipped to effectively assess and support the child through the right interventions to improve their emotional resilience and recovery, where children and young people’s emotional wellbeing is affected. We will:**

- Build resilience and support for all adults engaging with children and young people by promoting wider access to existing materials such as MindEd, a mental health e-portal which offers open access to online education for any adult working with children, young people and families, to help them support wellbeing and identify, understand, and support children and young people with mental health issues.
- Help voluntary and community sector organisations who see children, to take a trauma-informed approach. In practice this will mean that staff will understand the impact of the trauma on the child and they will seek to minimise it, thus preventing additional trauma. This will assist with earlier disclosure and improve the quality of support offered to children and young people.
- Help professionals identify those children most in need of support. Our new referral to treatment guidelines will improve access to assessment for C&YPMHS by supporting professionals in identifying and referring children that need support in building resilience.
- Increase provision for children who do not meet the threshold for C&YPMHS intervention but are also in need of support by improving commissioning and developing professional capability. We will encourage stronger multi-agency partnerships that ensure effective commissioning of support and upskill professionals, for example school nurses, in the services where they present to ensure they are well equipped to effectively assess and support the child through the right interventions.

### **Objective 3: Supporting victims and survivors**

**We are developing innovative approaches to improve victims’ experience of the Criminal Justice System:**

- We have **provided Police Innovation Funding of £7.15m** over two years to London Metropolitan Police and Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime, in conjunction with NHS London, to **pilot the ‘Child House’ model**. This model was pioneered in Iceland, and provides one location for children who have been abused to get a range of support they need across health, social care and support with police interviews. The bid will fund two initial ‘Child Houses’ in London. We will provide further funding over three financial years from the Social Care Innovation Programme to NHS England, to support the children’s social care contribution to the development and evaluation of the child house model. We are also providing funding of £752,000 over two years to Durham PCC to conduct a proof of concept of the way in which the ‘Child House’ model could best be adapted for their local needs.

### Case Study: Child House

**The Child House** (known as Barnahus in Iceland) has produced compelling results in Iceland, with twice as many cases of sexual abuse being investigated and the number of prosecutions having tripled. The concept has been implemented in other countries, including Sweden, Denmark and Cyprus. The key features of the concept are:

- A home-like setting to provide the child with familiarity, with all the services located at the house, so the child only has to visit one location, reducing the stress of visiting multiple, often intimidating, buildings.
- All children have an exploratory interview within a month of their initial disclosure, but over 80% occur within two weeks. The interview is conducted by a trained child psychotherapist in a child-friendly setting. If there is a disclosure the interview is stopped and an investigative interview convened. This interview will also be conducted by the child psychologist, but with an earpiece to communicate with a judge, defence lawyer, a prosecutor, and a child advocate. Any questions can be put to the child through the psychotherapist – including cross-examination – and the child's evidence is recorded and used at court.
- This means the child is subject to the minimum number of interviews possible and should not have to attend court, often a traumatising experience. The lack of repeated interviews has led to better evidence, as often multiple interviews of children have led to conflicting and contradictory evidence.
- Victims are encouraged to use props and drawings to explain what happened to them.
- As soon as the interview has happened, the child and family is immediately offered therapeutic support, even if the evidence provided is not enough to lead to a charge.

- We will ensure that **all witnesses are made aware that they can seek access to therapy** if required, to provide emotional support both before and after trial, including by revising the *Provision of Therapy to Child Witnesses in a Criminal Trial* guidance to make clear that the interests of the witness in criminal proceedings are paramount in ensuring there is access to therapy both before and after trial.
- We are running the **Young Witness Initiative**, which aims to expedite cases involving child witnesses under 10 years old, to ensure we maximise the opportunity to get their best evidence and minimise the stress and emotional impact of the criminal justice system process for these very young children. We will review the impact of the 2015 protocol between the CPS, police and HM Courts & Tribunals Service this year.
- We have commenced **full national roll out of video recording of all vulnerable/intimidated witness cross-examination**. This will improve the experience of child and adult survivors of sexual abuse giving evidence, allowing them to do so in advance of the full trial and for their evidence to be recorded and played back at the trial.

### We are developing measures to transform the support offered to victims:

- In addition to £7m core funding per annum to support victims of rape and sexual abuse, we will continue to provide an **additional £7m to support victims and survivors of child sexual abuse** in 2017/18. £4.7m of the additional £7m will be allocated by PCCs directly, £1.7m will go to Ministry of Justice funded female rape support centres, and £0.6m is being distributed centrally to national organisations combating child sexual abuse. We are also exploring options

for the remainder of the spending review period to give providers longer term security in providing support.

- Following National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) advice that social and emotional wellbeing creates the foundations for healthy behaviours and educational attainment, as well as helping to prevent behavioural and mental health problems, we are piloting **transformational approaches that join-up to meet the physical, emotional wellbeing, support, and advocacy needs of sexually abused children** in Birmingham, Rotherham and London. The pilots require case management systems so that children are supported for as long as they need. We will evaluate the outcomes and share the learning nationally. We have commissioned a piece of research into ways to develop an effective, trauma-informed healthcare service for young women who have experienced sexual exploitation and/or intimate partner violence. It will include an economic model for such a service based on the costs and outcomes of elements of existing services.
- We will develop a framework for better connecting the commissioning and delivery of both prevention and therapeutic support services for children and adult victims of childhood sexual abuse. The Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit will offer local areas support in implementing the framework in relation to children to ensure consistency of commissioning and support.
- In delivering the ambitions to improve children's mental health services, *Future in Mind*, published in 2015, we will continue to work with NHS England, which is driving a collaborative commissioning approach to benefit a group of children using services that they directly commission in the Health and Justice system; children whose needs are more complex, often because of underlying neglect and abuse. NHS England is combining with local commissioners to improve outcomes for this highly vulnerable group of children in custody, through an agreed care pathway between the various services involved, driven by the commissioners.
- We will work with professional bodies, NHS England, Public Health England and Health Education England on where efforts should be focused to **train staff on trauma-informed approaches to care, especially in mental health services**, which take the trauma into account and avoid triggering trauma reactions or re-traumatising, and support the person's coping capacity so they are able to access, retain and benefit from the services. The results of our discussion with domestic and international experts, which included colleagues from the US, will be shared by March 2017 with our arm's length body partners to inform further work in the health sector.
- People who have suffered sexual abuse in childhood can go on to endure chronic mental illness throughout their lives. As a result, they may be subject to over medicalisation, rather than being given access to appropriate, trauma informed therapeutic care. In order to help commissioners improve their decisions on which services to provide for this group, we will develop information on the **costs and benefits of the quaternary prevention of trauma as a result of child sexual abuse** (i.e. providing appropriate trauma-informed therapeutic care and preventing over medicalisation), so that commissioners can improve their decisions on services for treating people with chronic mental illness, where trauma from sexual abuse in childhood is an important factor.