

**Information Circular April 2017**

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**1. The Sentencing Council has revisited existing guidance covering domestic abuse to reflect that offences may involve physical violence but can also involve psychological, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.**

**Intimidatory Offences and Domestic abuse guidelines consultation (Ministry of Justice).**

Opened 30 March 2017, closes 30 June 2017

**Format:** Online Survey

Currently the magistrates Court does not provide sentencing guidelines for stalking, disclosing private sexual images and controlling or coercive behaviour offences. The Sentencing Council is seeking the views of people with an interest in the sentencing of the offences included within this consultation, and the revised domestic abuse guidance. The offences are:

- Harassment (including the racially or religiously aggravated form of this offence)
- Stalking (including the racially or religiously aggravated form of this offence)
- Controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship
- Disclosing private sexual images
- Threats to kill

The first section of the consultation contains revised guidance on the sentencing of offences committed within a domestic abuse context. Given the crossover between the types of offences contained within this draft guideline, and some of the themes running through the revised domestic abuse guidance, it was decided to consult jointly on both guidelines. Click the link here for more information and to respond to the consultation

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/sentencing-council/intimidatory-offences-and-domestic-abuse-guideline/>

**2. The ECSA Toolkit (Eradicating Child Sexual Abuse) – The Lucy Faithfull Foundation** This toolkit aims to help practitioners build a plan to prevent child sexual abuse – based on the practitioner’s understanding of the place they are in and the particular problems children face. Then, based on that understanding and an understanding about how abusers operate, it helps the practitioner consider what is known about prevention. This is to help them to decide, with others, what a good plan for prevention might look like. The ECSA Toolkit Publications include: Welcome the ECSA Toolkit; What is Child Sexual Abuse? Steps Towards Prevention: Prevent Abuse Theory; First Planning Meeting: Developing Your Strategy: ECSA Working Tool and Strategy Template & Examples. All of these publications are available to download via the ECSA website: <http://ecsa.lucyfaithfull.org>

**3. 11 further projects have been awarded £36 million of Innovation Programme funding** (March 2017) – as part of the Children’s Social Care Innovation Programme - Wave 2 projects. The 11 plans will help children who have been exposed to domestic abuse, support young disabled people living in care, and back care leavers as they get ready to start their adult lives. The 11 projects that have been awarded funding are:

- The Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime and NHS England’s Child House
- Newham’s NewDay project
- Northamptonshire county council’s alternative delivery model
- Shared Lives Plus
- The Fostering Network’s Mockingbird project
- Family Rights Group’s Lifelong Links
- Hertfordshire’s Family Safeguarding model
- Catch22 and Southwark council’s Care Leavers’ Partnership

- Havering council's project for children in, and leaving, care
- Slough's Transformation Programme
- Hackney's project on contextual safeguarding theory  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/innovative-projects-to-get-36-million-funding-boost>

To view the full list of Wave 1 and Wave 2 projects visit the [Spring Consortium](#) website

**4. How can hospitals and social services best work together to protect children from maltreatment?**

Children's Policy Research Unit. Case Study: Social Care. An exploration of how acute trust paediatric and local authority services work together in cases of suspected child maltreatment. The overall approach to services mattered: shared vision and commitment to partnership was important. Key findings have been published through videos and 'at a glance' summaries, as well as a full report and academic publication. <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/children-policy-research/publications/social-care-cs>

**5. Child neglect and abuse: comparing placement options** (Dr Julie Wilkinson, Dr Susannah Bowyer, Research and Analysis), from the DfE 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017: Evidence review. A review examining the effects of abuse and neglect on children and whether different placement types affect their outcomes. The aim is to provide a broad and accessible overview of the most relevant research. The primary focus is on key research from 2000 to 2016. The report is for local authority managers, social workers, judges and Cafcass children's guardians.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/602148/Childhood\\_neglect\\_and\\_abuse\\_comparing\\_placement\\_options.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/602148/Childhood_neglect_and_abuse_comparing_placement_options.pdf)

**6. Peer support and children's young people's mental health – Call for evidence analysis – a shorter version** – March 2017. The Department for Education published this summary and analysis of the responses to the call for evidence.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/603744/Peer\\_support\\_analysis\\_of\\_call\\_for\\_evidence\\_report\\_shorter\\_version.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603744/Peer_support_analysis_of_call_for_evidence_report_shorter_version.pdf)

**7. National Children's Bureau (NCB) Research Report – Children Missing Education** (March 2017).

The overarching aim of the research which took place between September 2015 and January 2017 was to give voice to children missing out on an education by developing an understanding of the pathways children take into missing education and what might prevent this, including effectiveness of policy and practice. Click on the link to download the **Final Report: children missing education** <https://www.ncb.org.uk/resources-publications/resources/children-missing-education> . Two further attachments are a [Report summary: children missing education](#), and [Young person's summary: children missing education](#).

**8. The Second Independent Review of the Personal Independence Payment Assessment (PIP)**, (Paul Gray, 30 March 2017). The Department for Work and Pensions is carrying out a quantitative and qualitative evaluation programme of PIP to examine the claimant experience. The first PIP independent review was published in December 2014. This, second review, builds on recommendations from the first review and considers how effectively further evidence is being

used to assist:- the correct claim decision; and the speed and effectiveness of information-gathering.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/604097/PIP-assessment-second-independent-review.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/604097/PIP-assessment-second-independent-review.pdf)

The Department for Work and Pensions published a call for evidence on 11 July 2016 seeking evidence from individuals and organisations to inform the review.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-PIP-assessment-second-independent-review>

For further information with regard to PIP and how to claim visit <https://www.gov.uk/PIP>

**9. HM Prison and Probation Service from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017** – is the new body taking on responsibility for commissioning and overseeing the youth secure estate from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and was officially launched by Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss. The aim of the new Service is to provide a frontline service focused on ‘reforming offenders and cutting crime’. Prison and Probation staff to be given increased training and clear career progression. This launch coincides with prison governors being given greater control of establishments. Responsibility and accounting for commissioning youth custody services will be taken on by the Ministry of Justice. For more information click the link <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/justice-secretary-launches-hm-prison-and-probation-service>. The HM Prison and Probation Service replaces the National Offender Management Service <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service>

**10. The Secretary of State has appointed Mr Alan Wood as a member of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) until the end of September 2017** <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/appointment-of-alan-wood-as-a-member-of-the-youth-justice-board>. Alan Wood was the Chair of the [Youth Custody Improvement Board \(YCIB\)](#), which was set up to explore and report on the current state of the youth custodial estate, and recommend how the system could be improved, particularly focusing on current risks to safety and wellbeing. The Board recently published its final report and made a number of recommendations as to how the system could be improved. Many of those recommendations are reflected in plans to reform the youth justice sector, in which the YJB will play a key role. In February 2017 Charlie Taylor was appointed as the new [Chair of the Youth Justice Board](#).

**11. National fostering stocktake – Independent call for evidence, (April 2017).**

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/children-in-care/national-fostering-stocktake-call-for-evidence-1/>

Sir Martin Narey has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Education to conduct a review of the fostering system in England. The launch date is 21 April 2017, and Respond by 16 June 2017. The document sets out that the review will cover a number of different areas:

- The types of fostering that are currently provided, in order to understand the full range of provision that is available and when and for which young people it is best used
- What works best within fostering settings to improve outcomes for the children and young people placed
- What improvements could be made to the way that fostering provision is commissioned, delivered, regulated and inspected to improve outcomes and value for money

- The status, role and function of foster carers in relation to other professionals as part of the team working with a child in care
- How the experiences of young people can be improved when entering foster care, transitioning between placements (between carers or into other settings), and leaving foster care
- Any other issues that might contribute to better outcomes for children

A report on the findings of the stocktake will be published by the end of 2017.

**12. Preventing Child Sexual Abuse (April 2017) – The Children’s Commissioner for England**, has issued 3 new publications. <http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publications/preventing-child-sexual-abuse>

**i) Investigating Child Sexual Abuse – the length of criminal investigations** – the report examines the timescales involved in CSA cases, from the point of initial report to the final determination in court. The data suggests that child sexual abuse investigations take longer than all other crime types...this is likely to be a period of huge uncertainty for victims of sexual abuse – the police and CPS should explore ways of working more effectively to minimise delays and increase the speed of decision-making.

**ii) Preventing Child Sexual Abuse – The Role of Schools** – The Commissioner has assessed the current provision of education programmes related to the prevention of child sexual abuse in schools in England through a survey issued to all schools and a series of focus groups. The evidence suggests that the potential role of schools in preventing child sexual abuse – giving children the knowledge to recognise abuse and seek help where necessary and the early identification of victims – is not yet being fulfilled. As schools begin planning for the introduction of mandatory relationships education at primary level and RSE at secondary level, consideration must be given to the ways in which a school can create opportunities for a child to seek help and disclose abuse. In particular, guidance on safeguarding in schools should broaden the focus from the processes for reporting concerns to the ways in which teachers and other school professionals can support children who are the subject of concern to talk about issues of concern and, where necessary, disclose abuse.

**iii) Making Noise- Children’s voices for positive change after sexual abuse.** This study was carried out in 2015/16 by staff from the International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Trafficking, in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire and the NSPCC. The research sought to respond to a recognised gap in evidence from the perspectives of children and young people affected by CSA in the family environment. The report found mixed feelings from child sexual abuse victims towards different agencies’ involvement in their lives. The report also found barriers to accessing help meant some abuse victims faced waiting years for appropriate support. The researchers identified ten key qualities victims wanted to see in professionals they worked with. These were:

1. Active listening (and supporting children to express themselves and feel heard)
2. Demonstrating belief
3. Care and compassion
4. Facilitating choice and control (including the absence of pressure)
5. Subject expertise
6. Facilitating safety
7. Optimism (reassurance and encouragement)

8. Advocacy (providing practical support, signposting and advice)
9. Non-judgmental (and respectful practice)
10. Trustworthy and authentic (engendering trust through honest, transparent and confidential practices)

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2017/04/20/abuse-victims-mixed-feelings-social-work-interventions/>

**13. Joint inspections of the response to children living with domestic abuse: September 2016 to March 2017.** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-inspections-of-the-response-to-children-living-with-domestic-abuse-september-2016-to-march-2017>

Ofsted have updated the reports on the thematic inspection of the multi-agency response to domestic abuse that highlight effective practice and some of the challenges of responding to Domestic Abuse.

**14. Joint targeted area inspections to focus on children living with neglect** - Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HM Inspectorate of Probation have announced a series of six joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) to examine how local partner agencies, including local authorities, health and probation services and the police, are working together to protect children living with, or at risk of, neglect in England. The inspections, starting in May 2017, will focus on the experiences of children aged between 7 and 15 years old, who may be at higher risk of going missing or being exploited, or who exhibit challenging behaviours in adolescence. Guidance for inspectors has been published <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/series-of-inspections-to-focus-on-children-living-with-neglect> Further information [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/608794/Guidance\\_for\\_joint\\_targeted\\_area\\_inspections\\_on\\_the\\_theme\\_children\\_living\\_with\\_neglect.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/608794/Guidance_for_joint_targeted_area_inspections_on_the_theme_children_living_with_neglect.pdf)

**15. Speech: Social care monthly commentary: 28 March 2017** Ofsted's National Director, Social Care, Eleanor Schooling, discusses what makes a good 'front door' service that fully protects children. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/social-care-monthly-commentary-march-2017>

## Tools for Children and Families, Parents and Carers

**16. Parents Protect! website is a project of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation and supported by the Home Office.** The website is an information and resources website which aims to raise awareness about child sexual abuse, answer questions and give adults the information, advice, support and facts, they need to help protect children. It includes the [Stop it Now](#) website for support for users of illegal online images and those around them and a confidential freephone helpline for parents and carers to talk through any issues or concerns; the guide **'What's the Problem'** is designed to help parents better understand the risks posed to children by the internet, and to keep them safe online; also an awareness video to give parents a good understanding of some of the key issues of child sexual abuse and how to create a family safety plan. <https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/>

**17. Voice box, Childline's weekly video chat talks about Exams and stress** and how to spot the signs that your exams are impacting your mental health, the difference between stress and having mental health problems, and who to turn to for help.

[YouTube](#) (19 April)

**Further information** [Childline](#)

**18. NetAware social media guide for parents** – The NSPCC has launched an updated NetAware site, a parent's guide to 39 of the most popular social media sites, apps and games used by young people. The guide, run in partnership with O2, and informed by 1,696 children and young people and 674 parents and guardians includes: tips showing how to help your child block or report someone targeting them; information about new apps like Pokemon Go, Periscope, IMVU, and Live.ly.

**Source:** [NSPCC](#) **Date:** 27 April 2017

**Further Information:** [NetAware](#)