

NHS IMPROVEMENT RESPONSE FOR IICSA SEMINAR

- 1. Please outline the steps your organisation has taken since 2015 to prevent children from being sexually abused in healthcare settings.**

The Executive Medical Director of NHS Improvement has the lead role in the organisation for safeguarding. It is the role of individual trust boards to ensure that all people in their care are safeguarded against sexual abuse. NHS Improvement will support boards to do this as and when required. We expect NHS organisations to participate fully in national and local safeguarding processes and procedures.

- 2. How well does the current legislative framework prevent the sexual abuse of children within healthcare settings?**

When followed correctly the legislative framework is effective in safeguarding children.

- 3. To what extent do the sanctions available to regulatory bodies ensure that children receiving health care and treatment are protected from sexual abuse? This includes the regulators of both: a) organisations providing healthcare services; and b) professionals delivering care and treatment.**

- 4. Are health professionals and health sector leaders provided with adequate training, support and guidance on the issue?**

This is a local decision, NHSI would expect NHS organisations to provide adequate safeguarding training at all levels and to all staff, accompanied by relevant support and guidance. However we know that this is not always the case as cited in CQC investigation reports.

- 5. How effectively are organisations and people held to account for the effective prevention of child sexual abuse in healthcare settings?**

NHSI would expect the Boards of NHS organisations to be assured that their organisation is effectively preventing sexual child abuse and also working collaboratively to do so in their area, and in this way hold the executives to account.

6. To what extent do the responsibilities of health sector organisations to work with partner agencies help to prevent child sexual abuse in healthcare settings?

As said above NHSI would expect healthcare organisations to work with national and local partners to prevent child sexual abuse. The responsibilities of such organisations to do so are clear.

7. What impact (if any) have reforms of the health sector in England and Wales over recent years had on the effective prevention of child sexual abuse in healthcare settings?

8. What do you see as being the major opportunities for organisations in the health sector to prevent the sexual abuse of children in healthcare settings?

The key opportunities for healthcare organisations are to ensure that they

- have comprehensive policies that reflect national legislation and guidance, including whistleblowing policies
- train all staff to be confident in safeguarding
- report to and assure the board regarding safeguarding in the organisation and local area
- collaborate with local and national partners

9. What needs to happen to ensure that organisations in the health sector best protect children receiving health care and treatment from being sexually abused?

Boards need to understand their responsibilities and be held to account for them. Collaborative working across all sectors needs to be encouraged and recognised. Good practice should be shared across all sectors.

10. Please describe the whistleblowing measures you have in place and how you assess their effectiveness.

NHSI has an external whistleblowing policy (in its role as a prescribed body) for NHS staff in trusts to raise concerns with us. These concerns are handled by a central specialist team with access to relevant legal and clinical advice, to ensure all concerns are considered thoroughly and sensitively. NHSI also has an internal whistleblowing policy for NHSI staff to raise concerns about their work, with support available from four internal Freedom to Speak Up guardians, as well as executive and non- executive directors with specific portfolio responsibilities for whistleblowing. NHSI is still a relatively new body, and the above arrangements are similarly new, but we plan to review the effectiveness of these arrangements annually, and on an ad hoc basis where appropriate.