

What improvements should be made to the systems and institutions to protect children from sexual abuse in future?

19. Establishments holding children should be stable with low levels of violence and intimidation. There should be respectful and caring relationships between staff and children.
20. Those working in the sector should be adequately qualified, trained and managed. The role of those who spend most time with children in custody (residential staff) should be seen primarily as one of care. Residential staff should be recognised as specialists that contribute to a wider professional workforce both in custody and the community that protects vulnerable children from harm.
21. Custodial institutions holding children should be smaller to facilitate positive relationships, enabling staff and children to spot signs of abuse and feel confident in reporting it.
22. Children should be held closer to the communities in which they live to facilitate the maintenance of positive, protective external relationships with family and friends as well as community-based professionals.
23. Existing procedures for reporting and investigating allegations of abuse should be followed rigorously.
24. The culture of institutions should change to one of openness and transparency. Children should be encouraged to report concerns, however small, and the response they receive should be both swift and fair.
25. External regulation, oversight and governance arrangements should be rationalised to give local managers more freedom to address issues and reduce the administrative burden on individual institutions.
26. There should be one inspection regime for the sector (comprised of YOIs, STCs and SCHs) that continues to give significant weight to safeguarding and child protection.

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