



INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Research presentation for the Victims and Survivors Forum

On 5 November 2018, the Inquiry's research team hosted an online presentation, live-streamed to members of the Victims and Survivors Forum using the IICSA YouTube channel. The aim was to provide Forum members with an update on the research programme. We invited Forum members to send in questions and comments; all of the verbatim questions from Forum members and the comments from the research team are below. We have responded to all questions.

We would like to thank all Forum members for their questions and their interest in the Inquiry's research programme.

General questions about research

Has IICSA Research Team carried out any research at all into the Armed Forces as an Institution that had nearly 9 million under 18 year old recruits pass through it's Residential Camps over 80 years?

No, the IICSA research team has not carried out any research into the armed forces as an institution.

Has any research been conducted on the issue young (under 18..Child trainees) military recruits restrained in military custody...either Guardrooms or Military Prison (MTCT Colchester....?)

We are not aware of much research conducted on this issue. HM Inspectorate of Prisons inspects the Military Corrective Training Centre and military service custody facilities or 'guardrooms'. It assesses safeguarding arrangements including use of restraint in these facilities and their inspection reports are published on their [website](#).

Has any research been undertaken as to the numbers of convictions of Military personnel for CSA/Rape of minors within the Armed Forces?

The IICSA research team has not undertaken any research on this. As with the question above, we are not aware of much wider research on the military. HM Inspectorate of Prisons inspects the Military Corrective Training Centre and military service custody facilities or 'guardrooms'. It assesses safeguarding arrangements including use of restraint in these facilities and their inspection reports are published on their [website](#).

What does the panel think about the ANONYMITY that is imposed on victim /survivors? My experience is that as a survivor, institutions have always assumed I want anonymity - "Of course you will be anonymous"! Whilst I fully respect and support the position of those that want and need anonymity, I do not and I have never wanted anonymity. I suspect society at large is projecting its myopia and reticence in addressing child sexual abuse on to victim/survivors. Why should victim survivors be encouraged to hide. How can we campaign while we're hiding? Further, perpetrators have been facilitated in committing their heinous crimes with impunity because victims have been encouraged to keep a low profile. I believe strongly that victim survivors should be asked whether or not they want anonymity, not told they will have it.

Section 1(1) of the Sexual Offences Amendment Act 1992 guarantees all victims and survivors of sexual offences lifelong anonymity. However it also permits a victim and survivor to waive that anonymity if they choose. Anonymity and confidentiality are also standard requirements in most social research practice and we have adopted such requirements as standard in the Inquiry's research. There are a number of reasons why this is done: to safeguard participants who otherwise would not want to take part; to allow participants to speak freely without worrying about personal repercussions for them; and to protect participants from any repercussions. In



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some cases, revealing the identity of one participant may lead to other research participants, who wish to remain anonymous, becoming identifiable; anonymity for all participants guards against this risk.

We recognise that there are individuals and circumstances where victims and survivors do not want to remain anonymous and we recognise the benefit of that. However, for the purpose of the Inquiry's research activities, we give anonymity to all participants.

What measures and support can be made available for survivors?

As part of the research process we strive to ensure that no participants are distressed by their involvement in the research. We provide all participants with information on support they can access if they are distressed by the research, ensuring it is specific to the different institutions involved in the research. This type of support may include: in-house resources at different institutions (for example a trusted teacher or employee helpline) as well as national resources such as the Samaritans. Further information on support available to victims and survivors outside of a research context can be found [here](#).

I was wondering, particularly after listening to the presentation on online abuse, with its focus on children and young people as participants, whether the research team has considered ways all IICSA's research reports may be made accessible to children and young people. Or indeed, more broadly, how the academic tone of research language can be adapted or minimised in order to reach a broader audience. Would it be valuable to consider different forms of reporting: academic, non-specialist, and child-friendly?

We are keen to ensure our research is accessible to a wide range of audiences and we try to avoid using academic language or professional jargon as much as possible. We have used a range of formats for our outputs such as infographics to illustrate key research points and blogs which give a short summary of what our research is about. We are continuing to develop different ways to communicate our research and will be producing specially tailored formats for different audiences, including at times for children and young people.

Questions about the research project on safeguarding children in youth custody

Are there any systems in place that may discover abuse that may have happened prior to being placed in custody?

The primary research on safeguarding children in custody did not explicitly ask this question of the establishments. However, good working relationships with different external agencies (such as social services) can allow for information to be shared about a child's past that may include prior experiences of abuse. The research also suggested that developing trusting relationships with the children in custody could facilitate disclosure of any prior abuse before custody.

Is 27 Children enough?

We recognise that the 27 interviews we conducted are not representative of all children's experiences whilst in custody. However, it was sufficient to provide us with an overview of a range of experiences and views of children held in these establishments. The type of research used in this project does not require large representative samples but instead is focused on exploring in detail experiences from a smaller subset of participants.

One of the emerging findings - Perceived risk of sexual abuse is low however violence and bullying from children are main concerns. Children do not really know or understand what CSA is. To me the violence and bullying is a precursor to child sexual happening. Is this a conclusion that you will draw?

We are currently finalising the research findings that will be drawn from the research and these will be available in the research report to be published in February 2019.



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Questions about the research project on safeguarding in residential schools

Residential schools may have day pupils: will the safeguarding of day pupils be taken into account in this research?

We understand that in many residential schools there is a large proportion of day pupils who need to be protected in the same way as residential pupils. We will ensure that day pupils are also offered the opportunity to participate as they will be exposed to the same safeguarding processes as pupils who board. However, the research will also focus on specific situations that apply to residential pupils only, such as those linked to boarding houses.

Residential schools... if you're not recording instances of abuse, how can you tell whether your identified issues have an effect?

The research aims to explore and understand safeguarding practice in residential schools from the perspectives of children, staff, parents and local authority staff. Although we will not be measuring the incidence of child sexual abuse in schools, we will be considering recording and reporting practice in schools, looking at how schools are recording incidents of child sexual abuse and how these are being reported to authorities such as the police. The research does not include any intervention in schools or evaluation of interventions but will provide information on current safeguarding practice in schools which will help to guide and inform the Inquiry's work in this area, including the residential schools investigation.

Are you interviewing adults who have been through the system to see what they think could help with being able to identify potential opportunities to avoid the abuse.

This research is focused on the current safeguarding picture in residential schools and therefore will not include adults who have previously been pupils at residential schools. If any victims and survivors wish to share what happened to them and have any suggestions for improvements, we suggest they do this via the Truth Project; we are analysing all the recommendations emerging from the Truth Project.

When I was in residential school there was no communication between the authorities were I lived and the authority were the school was. So the authority were the school was did not tell my local authority of the previous abuse in that school. Has anything changed to force each authority to keep each other informed of abuse at schools and not allow children to be trafficked from one town to another knowing the abuse exists there?

Our research on residential schools will explore the role of local authorities in the safeguarding process and how they share information relating to concerns that have been raised. The research report will be published in spring 2020.

During your upcoming research into schools (boarding) will you be looking into not just teachers pupils etc but include ground staff ie...gardeners caretakers chefs in your research?

The research will focus on interviewing those who have regular contact with the pupils and will seek to include a range of staff roles, not just teachers. It is possible that the research will explore the role of other staff who may not ordinarily have direct contact with the children in the safeguarding process to gain a fuller understanding.

Which residential school has had the most convictions.

Our research into residential schools does not include looking at the number of convictions in residential schools.

There is a strong belief that children are being recruited in to county lines in school and yet this appears to be kept as in house knowledge and there is no process to force



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schools to have outside agencies come in to schools to deliver the required support for pupils or training to staff to be able to safeguard pupils better.

County lines activity may be covered in our research into child sexual exploitation by organised networks (see below). This particular research project is looking at perpetrators operating in organised networks. Part of our selection criteria, which helps us to identify potential perpetrators to take part in the research, does include those involved in county lines. But as we have not yet started fieldwork, we cannot say yet whether we are able to interview perpetrators involved in county lines activities. We will also keep this point in mind when we are carrying out our research in residential schools.

Questions about the Truth Project data analysis

Mental health - are you going to establish the data for the mental health provision needed due to child sexual abuse, looking at costs to NHS. Also can a view be established as to long term outcomes for victims and survivors mental health, including a discussion exploring the resulting suicides?

Part of our analysis will involve looking at the impacts of child sexual abuse on victims and survivors that they have shared with the Truth Project. This includes information on mental health impacts, as well as impacts on other aspects of life such as education and relationships. We have also published a rapid evidence assessment on the impacts of child sexual abuse, which included information on mental health impacts. This report can be found [here](#).

How many Military cases of CSA are included in total in the Truth Project figures...?

An initial analysis of 520 participants from the Truth Project found that seven people reported being abused in a military institution, such as the Royal Navy or armed forces.

What % people who V&S who have come forwards have said the abuse they have suffered was in the home and they were failed by schools, police, social care please?

Our reports analysing information from the Truth Project will include figures on the number of people who were abused in the family home or in the community and were failed by institutions. Our [Voices from the Truth Project](#) report found that 21 per cent of people reported that they had been abused by a family member and were failed by an institution.

I would be interested to know how the referrals to Police Forces and these being turned into investigations looks? I believe you have been referring for 2 years now and would be hydrant interested how this compares to Forces acting on your referrals.

At the time of the Inquiry's Interim Report publication, our referrals to Operation Hydrant had led to a total of 2,402 referrals being made to police forces or law enforcement agencies. Of these, 78 percent have resulted in no further action being taken following a review by the appropriate police force. This can be due to a variety of reasons, such as there not being sufficient evidence to proceed, not being able to trace the perpetrator or because the victim and survivor no longer wishes to continue with the criminal process. As at December 2018, referrals have resulted in 29 convictions, with a further 17 suspects currently awaiting trial. Additionally, some referrals will also be flagged by forces for safeguarding by other agencies, and so there can be outcomes other than criminal justice ones in this regard. More information on referrals in general can be found in section 2.6 of our [Interim Report](#).



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Are you going to take the research to the next level. ie you say 18% of abuse took place in religious institutions? How is this broken down?? I suggest we need more in depth detail??

In our thematic reports we will be looking at specific types of institutions in greater depth. For example, our report on religious institutions will analyse data relating to several different types of religious institutions. At the end of the Inquiry, we will publish an overall Truth Project report which will look at common themes across institutions.

Are there specific patterns or themes common to survivors' suggestions on how to tackle CSA? Such as mandatory reporting?

Victims and survivors taking part in the Truth Project have made a range of suggestions about how to address child sexual abuse and exploitation. The Inquiry will be examining them in more detail but examples of common themes raised are: talking more openly about abuse; better training for professionals to help them identify abuse and respond appropriately; providing education for children and young people; ensuring all children have access to adults who they can safely confide in; making changes to the statutes of limitation in criminal cases; changing the rules and procedures around claiming compensation; improved responses from responsible institutions and authorities where there have been institutional failings; and better provision of counselling and support services for victims and survivors.

What about SA in family and community?

Child sexual abuse within families and communities is often spoken about by Truth Project participants. In examining institutional failings the Inquiry is considering how child sexual abuse occurring within these contexts has been dealt with. Our report into the findings from the Truth Project will include sexual abuse in family and community circumstances where institutions have failed to respond appropriately.

How is it that suicide is not being mentioned? I find this extremely concerning as we missing a truth.

Many people who attend the Truth Project are victims and survivors who have come to talk about what happened to them as children. In a very small number of cases, relatives or friends attend on behalf of victims who committed suicide following abuse. Consequently, the number of Truth participants known to have died by suicide is very low. We do, however, collect information on the impact of child sexual abuse on mental health in Truth Project sessions. This includes information on suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide. More information on this can be found in our [Voices from the Truth Project report](#).

Why include statistics for abuse in schools, welfare institutions and churches but not abuse within the FAMILY environment, where I believe most of it happens

As set out in our terms of reference, the Inquiry is not focusing on familial sexual abuse where there is no allegation of institutional failure. Child sexual abuse within families and communities is often spoken about by Truth Project participants. In examining institutional failings the Inquiry is considering how child sexual abuse occurring within these contexts has been dealt with. Our report into the findings from the Truth Project will include sexual abuse in family and community circumstances where institutions have failed to respond appropriately. Our [Voices from the Truth Project](#) report found that 21 per cent of people reported that they had been abused by a family member.

What about a thematic report around those let down by institutions please

Looking at institutional responses to child sexual abuse is a key part of our Truth Project analysis. Although we are not doing a thematic report looking specifically at individuals let down by institutions, we will be looking at institutional responses to child sexual abuse in each of our reports, including failures to respond to abuse that took place in family or community settings.



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How do you propose to help victims when because of cuts there are no counselors, people can't afford to go private, how your gonna help them

The Truth Project analysis aims to increase our knowledge around the experiences of abuse from victims and survivors who have taken part in the Truth Project, as well as their recommendations for change. This will feed into the overall recommendations of the Inquiry.

Having done the truth project in person can I and more evidence in writing?

You are welcome to submit further information to the Truth Project after your session. You can contact us in the following ways: You can email us at share@truthproject.org.uk. You can write to us at the free postal address 'Freepost IICSA Independent Inquiry'. You can call our information line on 0800 917 1000. Further details are available on the [Truth Project microsite](#).

Regarding the Truth Project, has information fed to the police led to action on their part? What feedback from the police have you received?

At the time the Inquiry's interim report was published, 2,402 referrals had been made to police forces or law enforcement agencies. Of these, 78 percent have resulted in no further action being taken, following a review by the appropriate police force. This can be due to a variety of reasons, such as there not being sufficient evidence to proceed, the police not being able to trace the perpetrator or because the victim and survivor no longer wishes to continue with the criminal process. As at December 2018, referrals have resulted in 29 convictions, with a further 17 suspects currently awaiting trial. Additionally, some referrals will also be flagged by forces for safeguarding by other agencies, and so there can be outcomes other than criminal justice ones in this regard. More information on referrals in general can be found in section 2.6 of our [Interim Report](#).

Questions about the research project on safeguarding against online child sexual abuse

Have you looked at or are you considering 'sexual bullying' - not simply generic bullying, with regard to safeguarding, residential settings etc.

The Inquiry is aware of the issue of online sexual bullying, and whilst it isn't the specific focus of this primary research project, more information on this form of sexual abuse may emerge from the project's fieldwork.

Will you include sexual bullying within care settings and school settings and other research in the future?

IICSA has published three Rapid Evidence Assessments that bring together the research evidence available at the time of writing on various aspects of [online-facilitated child sexual abuse](#). Whilst sexual bullying has not arisen specifically, research evidence has emerged on sexting and other exploitative online behaviours.

Questions about the research project on CSE perpetrators in organised networks

Does the research into organised networks include historic networks? For example, I have reason to believe my abuser (a bishop in the 1970's) had links to other paedophiles and to influential people in society. We have seen this at IICSA with Peter Ball. Networks were there long before the internet was invented!!!

This particular research project is looking at perpetrators operating in organised networks as well as prevention approaches to disrupting this behaviour. The research is small scale and involves interviews with a small number of perpetrators so we have limited the scope of the research to the last 10 years. We are focusing on more recent cases so we can make a



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contribution to the current knowledge base on prevention strategies. There is a future Inquiry investigation into sexual exploitation of children by organised networks that will look at a much wider timeframe and will include historic cases.

Were the young people asked about their understanding of county lines and how would they know they were being groomed... given those children are genuinely most at risk of such organised crime groups and do not realise they have been groomed until it is too late.. also do the staff know how to recognise such behaviours given that children are often groomed by other children to recruit into county lines.

This particular research project is looking at perpetrators operating in organised networks. This research will not be interviewing any children and victims and survivors of sexual exploitation by networks. Part of our selection criteria, which helps us to identify potential perpetrators to take part in the research, does include those involved in county lines. But as we have not yet started fieldwork, we cannot say yet whether we are able to interview perpetrators involved in county lines activities.

How can you tackle organised networks, as soon as one is arrested, another one takes the place

One of the reasons we are looking into perpetrators of child sexual exploitation operating in organised networks is to develop our understanding of how networks operate in order to effectively prevent and disrupt this behaviour. We are planning to look at how networks avoid detection and explore some of the social factors that have facilitated exploitative behaviour. We will also seek to understand how professionals and relevant agencies prevent and disrupt this behaviour and how this is perceived by perpetrators. This is small scale research project involving interviews with up to 25 perpetrators. Very little research has been carried out in this area so we hope our research findings can contribute to the wider research on prevention.

I understand the need to research organised networks and how perpetrators work in this setting. But is there research happening to ascertain this same set of questions in a domestic setting ie. family/friend perpetrators?

At the moment this is the only piece of research being carried out by the Inquiry looking at the motivations of perpetrators who operate in organised networks.

You mentioned this means organisations between more than one persons. I would like to ask would you include ritual abuse abusers in that category and if not where would they come in.

For this particular piece of research we are focusing on organised groups that sexually exploit children. We have defined an organised group as 'two or more persons who are known to one another and are involved in the sexual exploitation of a child. This can include introducing them to others for the purpose of exploitation, trafficking a child and taking payment for sexual activities with a child'. As we have not yet started fieldwork, we cannot say at this stage what type of perpetrators will take part in this research.

The new research about perpetrators what about where families sell their kids for sex ahow much does this go on I have a friend this happened to and she can't be the only one.

As above, for this particular piece of research we are focusing on organised groups that sexually exploit children. We have defined an organised group as 'two or more persons who are known to one another and are involved in the sexual exploitation of a child. This can include introducing them to others for the purpose of exploitation, trafficking a child and taking payment for sexual activities with a child'. As we have not yet started fieldwork, we cannot say at this stage what type of perpetrators will take part in this research.



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Information about 'county lines' gangs tends to focus on boys, the victimisation of girls is often overlooked. The Home Office have produced a report, Girls and Gangs, which is informative, and should inform IICSA research.

We are currently carrying out a literature review of the existing research in this area to inform this particular research project. We have looked at literature on gang and county lines activity as part of the review.

The CSE in organised networks research MUST include research into the issue of Military initiation culture amongst trainees given that these initiations are encouraged by the Military as 'character building' and part of the Military ethos of 'comradeship'. It was common practice of older trainees to pick on a vulnerable recruit and groom for sex (these were inevitably heterosexual with the victim being perceived to be 'queer') and then pass around the group using the notion of 'accepted into the group'....Often the NCOs in charge would be the initiators of contact and protected the abusers using threats against the victim....I was raped and then sexually abused for 2 years by sch a group....one of the 7 abusers went on, 2 years later, to do the same at another RAF Camp....50 years later none of them are apologetic and police investigating were ex Military and saw the issue as the 'norm'...despite one abuser openly admitting the abuse none were charged by Police...I now at 65 suffer Complex PTSD, Fibromyalgia and IBS because of the rape/abuse and yet Veterans regularly try to silence me with threats...and Veteran Charities refuse to acknowledge such abuse was wrong.

As above, for this particular piece of research we are focusing on organised groups that sexually exploit children. We have defined an organised group as 'two or more persons who are known to one another and are involved in the sexual exploitation of a child. This can include introducing them to others for the purpose of exploitation, trafficking a child and taking payment for sexual activities with a child'. As we have not yet started fieldwork, we cannot say at this stage what type of perpetrators will take part in this research. However, military initiation culture does not fall within the scope of this particular project.

Questions about the Inquiry

Has the IICSA Chair and Team members as well as any others in IICSA signed the Official Secrets Act in any form...? If so did the Home Office give instructions as to which Institutions not to investigate...?

The Inquiry has power to obtain and consider evidence from anywhere in England and Wales, including from government and from the security and intelligence agencies. It has already used these powers and put previously classified information that is relevant to its work in the public domain. The Inquiry is independent of government and it is the Inquiry Panel that decided which institutions to investigate, not the Home Office or any other organisation or person.

Is IICSA viewing Military Residential Schools/Training Institutions/Camps as within the Inquiry remit....?

The Inquiry is not currently examining such institutions specifically. However, the Residential Schools investigation is requesting information on child sexual abuse occurring at a number of residential military training colleges and residential schools with a military connection. It is too soon to say whether they will form part of the Residential Schools investigation hearing process.

What happens when IICSA ends?

The Inquiry will produce a final report and then it is for the government to implement its recommendations.

Will institutions that made failings in the past, where abuse was reported, but not acted on, be held accountable for such failings.



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Most of the research team's work is focused on the current situation, with the exception of the Truth Project analysis. The investigations are helping the Inquiry to understand how institutions have failed to protect children from sexual abuse.

Where, the law was clearly broken or where interview techniques, used by authorities, were deemed inappropriate or illegal, will these institutions be held accountable.

The Inquiry holds institutions to account for failures to protect children through its investigations, hearings and reports.

If a Doctor or medical professionals, failed to declare evidence of abuse, even when highlighted by other medical professionals, will they or can they now be held accountable.

The Inquiry holds institutions to account for failures to protect children through its investigations, hearings and reports. It does not currently have an investigation looking specifically at the medical profession, but looks at issues relating to medical professionals where they arise in the current work programme.

If evidence, notes and files have been doctored or destroyed by institutions, trying to cover up abuse, where these institutions etc are supposed keep them for a certain length of time, (due to freedom of information) can these institutions now be held accountable for these failings, where there was clear evidence of abuse and failing to act within the law or law being broken?

It is an offence for anyone to destroy records which are relevant to the Inquiry's work. The Chair has issued a retention instruction, which has been sent to all local authorities, government departments, faith organisations and police forces across the country.

At what level of command or responsibility of the MOD is IICSA prepared to challenge ...does this include Rtd Heads of Armed Forces within the Westminster Commons/Lords Investigation setting or has no research been undertaken...?

The Inquiry has no current plans to call senior military figures to give evidence in its hearings. However, if it chooses to do so, it has the statutory power to ask for evidence from anyone in the military hierarchy, no matter how senior.

Other questions raised

I was disappointed that yet again the largest place where childhood sex abuse goes on is in the home and again this is ignored in your presentations

We understand that many victims and survivors have experienced abuse in familial settings. However as set out in the terms of reference of the Inquiry, the Inquiry is not focusing on familial sexual abuse where there is no allegation of institutional failure. In examining institutional failings the Inquiry is considering how child sexual abuse occurring within family and community settings has been dealt with. Our analysis of the Truth Project data will include sexual abuse in family and community circumstances where institutions have failed to respond appropriately.

Were the Anglicans or the Catholics more abusive?

The IICSA research team has not carried out any work which would enable this type of comparison. In 2017 we published a [Rapid Evidence Review](#) of the available research on child sexual abuse in the Anglican and Catholic churches. This presented information about the churches in the same report and drew out common themes between them where appropriate. However, it did not seek to make direct comparison between the two in terms of the extent of child sexual abuse.



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Which local authority was the most abusive in the UK?

The work the IICSA research team has done to date does not address this question.

One of the biggest life impacts this has had on me is the loss of my faith and what I refer to as spiritual abuse. I wonder if the research team have considered looking into the impact of CSA on spiritual well being. There appears to be very little understanding of this element of CSA and your REA on the Anglican and Catholic churches didn't really touch on this topic. There also appears to be no understanding of how spiritual reparation could be managed and how survivors like me could best be supported in this matter.

The impact of child sexual abuse on religious and spiritual beliefs of victims and survivors was covered in our rapid evidence assessment on the impacts of child sexual abuse. The rapid evidence assessment summarised existing research on the impact of child sexual abuse over a range of dimensions, including the religious and spiritual beliefs of victims and survivors. The full report can be accessed [here](#), and the summary [here](#).

Other comments by Forum members

CSE not to be used as it dampens down what is really happening.

Local communities should be more aware of what is going on where they live with regard to exploitation, so they can help safeguard children in the local area.

Reduce brushing under the carpet.

Social services, police and schools are hearing children in care being involved in drug dealing and sexual exploitation, they are no longer shocked by it and it is almost seen as though it is now normal for a vulnerable child to be involved in these crime groups

When a child is known to be being exploited, there is no exit strategy for them or urgency to help them out of county lines.

There is no prevention for children who are deemed to be vulnerable and high risk and believed to be targeted by county lines when they are older (these children need to be taught to look confident, in how they walk and talk. To understand if your given something for free then you will be debt)

There is also no immediate support service for young people who are showing signs of being perpetrators themselves.

When a young person is arrested for possession drugs, they are automatically seen as an offender and not as a likely victim themselves.. they are then put back out on the street, having had the drugs they were carrying taken off them, now in debt with county lines and will have to do what they are told to pay off the debt, this can sometimes be sex.

CAHMS which is now NELFT has such a backlog of referrals that there is not the mental health and therapeutic support readily available that our young people need access too.

(We have not included comments that may raise safeguarding issues)