



Supporting adults who have experienced Child Sexual Abuse

Policy Statement: Resource Pack

Visible is about giving organisations and their practitioners the framework, support and resources for helping improve the lives of survivors of child sexual abuse.

We know that individual organisations have different ways of working – as well as different capacities and timescales – so we're determined to help in ways that suit each one best, without any pressure or urgency. Ultimately, we want

organisations to feel a part of **Visible**, and to know that by supporting its aims and following its recommendations, whenever and however they can, they're helping to make important differences.

Getting started is easy

In this Resource Pack we provide the key items you need for signing up your organisation to our Policy Statement, when the organisation is ready. That will mark the beginning of its explicit commitment to improving services for survivors of child sexual abuse. Our Policy Statement is editable, and that means you can apply your own organisation's logo to it. It's worth remembering that you can use this statement when it comes to evidencing your work for Commissioners and funders.

We've also provided documents that you can use to help explain **Visible** to your

colleagues, or as a handy reference for future action. To make sure **Visible** is as relevant and effective as possible, we've developed these documents with the help of survivors of child sexual abuse.

You can share and discuss the pack with your colleagues, then get the commitment of your Board or senior leadership before beginning to work your way through the Policy Statement Action Planning Resource. If you have any questions along the way, we'll be more than happy to help.



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Policy Statement: Briefing for Organisations

Introduction

Leeds **Visible** partnership is about making the invisible visible, in order to improve health and well-being outcomes for adult survivors of child sexual abuse.

Visible is a catalyst for system change across Leeds, with adult survivors influential in all aspects of delivering improvements.

Visible aims to support improvements in services' responses to adults who have experienced child

sexual abuse, and to support statutory bodies in developing relevant policies and best practices.

Visible...

- Influences service providers at strategic, organisational and frontline levels
- Impacts strategy, policy and commissioning
- Equips staff with awareness and confidence to develop competence
- Shares best practice and disseminates learning and national research

Background to the template Policy Statement

Soon after **Visible's** inception, it was recognised that there was a need for a city-wide cross-cutting framework of principles around responding well to adults who have experienced child sexual abuse. A steering group of key stakeholders from

the statutory and voluntary sectors, together with adults with lived experience, developed a template city-wide Policy Statement for organisations to consider adopting.

Aim of the Policy Statement

The Policy Statement is a catalyst for action. It provides a framework for organisations seeking to improve their responses, and it helps organisations to develop an underpinning action plan.

Actions will vary between organisations and might include:

- Updating governance policies
- Raising awareness
- Training staff
- Revising operational policies and procedures

The **Policy Statement Action Planning Resource** supports organisations to adopt its principles.

Insert organisation logo here

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Policy Statement

Public awareness of child sexual abuse and its impact on the day-to-day lives of many victims/survivors has increased over recent years. As with other life traumas or challenges – such as domestic violence, bereavement, or relationship breakdown – it is important that employers and service providers are supportive.

This organisation commits to:

- Recognising that people employed by us or using our services might have experienced child sexual abuse that may have a significant impact on their everyday lives.
- Promoting knowledge of the impact of child sexual abuse throughout our workforce.
- Listening with empathy and compassion to people who choose to speak about their abuse, and treating them with respect.
- Supporting those who talk about their abuse and those who listen to accounts of abuse.

This organisation acknowledges that survivors of child sexual abuse may have vulnerabilities as a consequence of that abuse, but also qualities and strengths which they have developed to help them live their lives.

This organisation recognises that it is essential for those who have experienced child sexual abuse to feel safe at work or when using services. Responding to them as an individual with unique experiences will help, as will being mindful of any links to the Equality Act 2010*.

*Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics comprise age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Commitment adopted by (insert organisation name) on (insert date) at the meeting of (insert meeting name) e.g. Commitment adopted by Women's Counselling and Therapy Service on 14th November 2018 at the meeting of Visible Steering Group



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Policy Statement: Action Planning Resource

This Resource is designed to support organisations to develop an action plan. Developing an action plan can help organisations implement and embed their commitments and aspirations under the Policy Statement. An action plan will describe the way a particular organisation will meet the principles of the statement.

This Resource suggests a number of actions based on good practice for consideration. Some organisations may choose to focus on two to three areas or tasks in year one; others may choose many more and or develop their own. The way forward for each organisation will differ. **Visible** supports the autonomy of organisations to decide how to implement the Policy Statement.

Organisations achieving good practice will have a clear action plan and commit to reviewing their plan at least every two years. After each action example there is space for you to make notes and

comments. Example of Action Plans can be found on the **Visible** website.

For ease of use, this resource is divided into five areas:

- Governance
- Communications / raising awareness action examples
- Training action examples
- Operational policies and procedures action examples
- Organisations that provide health and social care services action examples

Governance

An organisation achieving good practice has:

- Formally adopted the Policy Statement.

- Developed an action plan to implement the Policy Statement.

- Displayed a branded Policy Statement in public areas.

- Displayed *MindWell* and *MindMate* publicity cards in public areas.

Communications / raising awareness action examples

Staff are encouraged to:

- Explore the **Visible** website* and become familiar with its content and resources during induction / on-boarding.

- Discuss the impact of child sexual abuse and help each other to overcome fears around speaking about this previously 'taboo' and 'hidden' subject.

- Explore the *MindWell* child sexual abuse webpage* and recognise its importance as a 'go to' place for support, signposting and information for everybody.

- Be aware of victim/survivor expectations of treatment specified in the Mental Health 'I' Statements with additional Child Sexual Abuse Survivor Core Values*.

- Watch *Opening Doors: Trauma Informed Practice for the Workforce* (8 minutes) and *Adverse Childhood Experiences – Wales* (6 minutes)*.

* Supporting resources available on the **Visible** website, www.visibleproject.org.uk

Training action examples

Organisational, team and or individual training and development plans:

- Ensure all staff are aware of Safeguarding policies, including explicit reference to working with those who have experienced child sexual abuse and those who have abused children.

- Identify all roles / departments where targeted training about child sexual abuse would be helpful to their work.

- Inform relevant staff of the meaning and impact of 'secondary or vicarious trauma' and taken steps to minimise its effects (specific resources are available on the **Visible** website)*.

- Ensure relevant staff have the knowledge, confidence and competence to ask for (and respond well to) disclosures of child sexual abuse (specific team workshop resources e.g. Why ask about violence and abuse in the context of mental health? are available on the **Visible** website)*.

- Include an awareness of the National Trauma Training Framework and Training Plan (NHS Education for Scotland guidance)*.

* Supporting resources available on the **Visible** website, www.visibleproject.org.uk

Operational policies and procedures action examples

Organisational policies include:

- A staff well-being policy and a culture that supports the good health and welfare of all.

- An established, confidential support system in place for staff who wish to discuss matters related to child sexual abuse.

- Procedures in place to address any development issues for staff who are seen or heard treating people who may have experienced child sexual abuse without compassion or respect.

Organisations that provide health and social care services action examples

Organisations have:

- A culture that offers hope, and that focuses on people's successes, strengths and goals at the same time as their difficulties.

- A safe environment that enables people to share about child sexual abuse, encourages early intervention, and routinely asks about abuse in assessments of need (where relevant).

- A provision for regular clinical (confidential and trauma-informed) supervision available to all staff working directly and regularly with victims / survivors of child sexual abuse.

- A regular reflective practice space for shared learning and support, available to all staff working directly with those affected by child sexual abuse.

- A policy and procedure to address the 'secondary or vicarious trauma' of staff, including raising awareness of it at induction training and line management meetings.

- An awareness that people who have experienced child sexual abuse benefit from empowerment-based approaches, with meaningful choices whenever possible within medical, social and psychological interventions.

- An awareness of actions and words that could re-traumatise a victim/survivor of child sexual abuse, particularly around power and rejection, and a commitment to minimising the risk of this occurring.

- A mechanism to raise the issues of non-recent (or historic) child sexual abuse with user / involvement / patient groups, and a way of seeking views on the issue and identifying improvements.

- A comprehensive and public complaints policy for service users.

- Adopted, and works to, The Survivors Trust specialist service standards (for specialist rape and sexual abuse services only).
