

Safeguarding Update



1. Sexually exploited boys

September 2018

Sexually exploited boys and young men often miss out on the support they would receive if they were girls because professionals don't always recognise them as victims, a new study shows.

New Home Office-funded research carried out by Barnardo's has revealed that professionals may have difficulty in identifying and engaging boys and young men in terms of their history of abuse and trauma.

Behaviour that might trigger concerns that girls are at risk is sometimes put down to 'boys being boys', leaving many victims without the specialist support they need.

Boys involved in the research project said the failure to see them as possible victims of abuse had created barriers and stopped boys talking about abuse suffered.

The BOYS2 research was led by Barnardo's Better Futures Cymru, which supports children and young people across Wales who have sexualised histories and Barnardo's Base Project in Bristol, which helps children and young people who have been sexually exploited.

Barnardo's researchers spent six months interviewing male survivors of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and heard how many had endured difficulties including chaotic home environments, domestic violence and unstable living arrangements, often moving between care and extended family.

They also reported poor relationship and sex education in schools, a lack of pastoral support, with many having low self-esteem and feeling lonely and isolated, or excluded from support networks.

A lack of healthy attachment to others and a need to find a place in their peer group had made them vulnerable to developing unsuitable social networks, which had brought them into contact with sexual and criminal exploitation.

Jack's story

Some young people Barnardo's works with through Better Futures take months before they start trusting their project worker enough to share their experiences of abuse.

One of them is "Jack" (not his real name), 18. Like many young men he only received help after going through the criminal justice system. He said: "As a child my dad was in jail and I was abused physically, sexually, mentally and emotionally. "Growing up I was very angry, I pushed people away and didn't trust people. I was in care, foster placements and residential homes, bounced back and forth and told no one could work with me because I was too high risk.

When I first came to Barnardo's I found it really difficult to talk about what I had done and what had happened to me. "Jane my project worker helped me to talk even when I didn't want to. Jane helped me understand how my past had influenced my behaviour, but, she never focused on the behaviour or my conviction but on me as a child. That was the most important thing.

"I had built a relationship where I could trust. I wasn't judged or criminalised. I was looked at as a child.

"Over the last 12 months I have left care, moved into my own place and got a job. This is the start of my better future. Everyone can have a better future if they can trust one person at least."

Link: http://www.barnardos.org.uk/news/Sexually-abused-boys-may-not-be-identified-reveals-Barnardo8217s/press_releases.htm?ref=130052

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2. Bullying in schools

How can schools use data to prevent and tackle bullying?

Why collect data on bullying?

Bullying is widespread and can have harmful effects on children and young people's attainment, ambition, emotional wellbeing and health.

In England, Scotland and Wales, governments and inspectorates expect schools to show how effective their anti-bullying policies are, including tackling prejudice-based bullying (this can include homophobia, racism, sexism and transphobia).

Collecting data helps schools to develop effective anti-bullying policies, enabling them to identify where bullying is taking place and spot trends in bullying.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published advice and guidance on how schools in England, Scotland and Wales can use data to monitor and prevent bullying. The guide covers: creating an anti-bullying culture in schools; finding ways for students and staff to report bullying incidents; finding ways to record and review the data on bullying; and communicating anti-bullying messages.

Link: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=wm#label/NSPCC+and+keith+driver/164a3dc231a9cae8>

3. Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

In an article, Ofsted's National Director of Social Care, Yvette Stanley discusses what's needed to ensure effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements improve the response to children in need of help and protection. Using findings from Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) reviews and joint targeted area inspections (JTAs) the article highlights components of successful partnerships including: child-focused leadership; understanding local need and using information from across different agencies; ensuring a joined-up approach and understanding professional practice and valuing professional disciplines. Ofsted has also published a document setting out how Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services inspect safeguarding arrangements.

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-short-monitoring-and-unannounced-behaviour-school-inspections>