

A stylized, colorful map of Plymouth, Devon, serves as the background. The map features green landmasses, blue water, and various buildings and landmarks. The word 'Plymouth' is written in red across the top. The map includes a lighthouse, a boat, and a bridge.

A public health approach for the prevention of child sexual abuse

NOTA Prevention Committee
19th November 2024

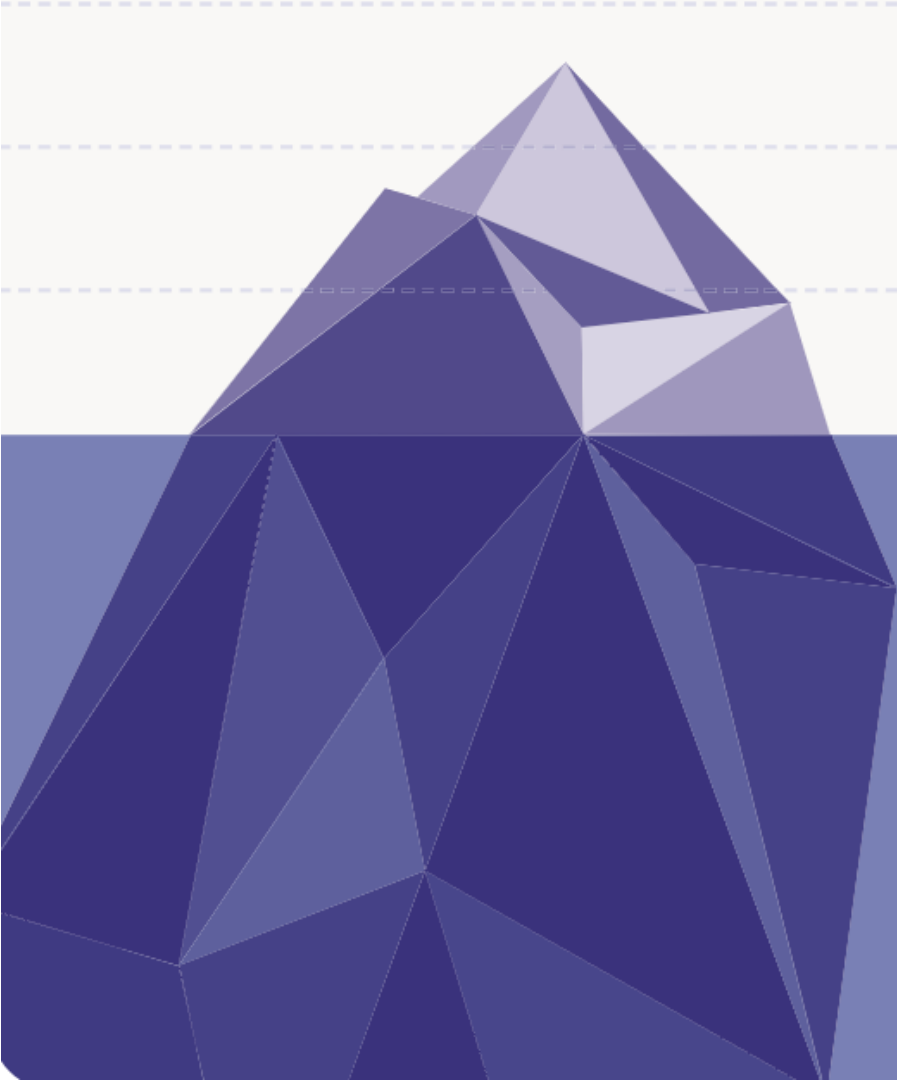
Pat Branigan, Assistant Director, NSPCC

Imagine a childhood disease that affects 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 7 boys worldwide. Its effects can stay throughout a lifetime and include increased risk of suicide, substance misuse, STI's and vulnerability to further bouts. That can replicate itself and cause some victims to expose future generations to its debilitating effects. Image what we would do if such a disease existed.

Society would come together to protect children from harm, help victims recover and we would aim to eradicate it. Wouldn't we?

Far more children are sexually abused than services identify

Child sexual abuse in 2021/22: Trends in official data
csacentre.org.uk

An iceberg graphic where the visible tip represents identified cases and the submerged part represents estimated cases. The tip is divided into three horizontal sections corresponding to the first three statistics. The submerged part is a single large section corresponding to the fourth, much larger statistic.

2,700 children on a child protection plan due to child sexual abuse (England and Wales)

50,000 children assessed at risk of sexual abuse* (England)

103,000 child sexual abuse offences recorded by the police (England and Wales)

500,000

children are estimated to be sexually abused every year**

Sources: Home Office, Police recorded crime and outcomes, 2021/22; Department for Education, Characteristics of Children in Need, 2021/22. * Includes assessments recording concerns of child sexual abuse and exploitation ** Estimate calculated using single-year prevalence estimates by age group (Radford et al, 2011, Childhood abuse and neglect in the UK today) and the Office for National Statistics 2021 Census results. Please note: numbers rounded to the nearest hundred.

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse



NSPCC

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Towards a national strategy for England

Jon Brown and Aliya Saled-Tessier

Public health
approaches to
Child Sexual
abuse

the CHURCHILL fellowship

Establishing a UK public health framework for the prevention of child sexual abuse



Churchill Fellowship

5,602 followers

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We're delighted to announce our partnership with [Children & Young People Now](#) to disseminate critical insights from our Fellows.

[Pat Branigan](#)'s report, "Exploring the need for a widely adopted and accessible public health framework to address child sexual abuse in the UK," offers invaluable solutions. His Fellowship focused on developing this framework to combat intra-familial child sexual abuse.

Visit the link to read an abridged version of his findings: <https://lnkd.in/eVqsmCJG>

Thank you CYP Now for amplifying this essential conversation. [#ChildProtection](#) [#PublicHealth](#)

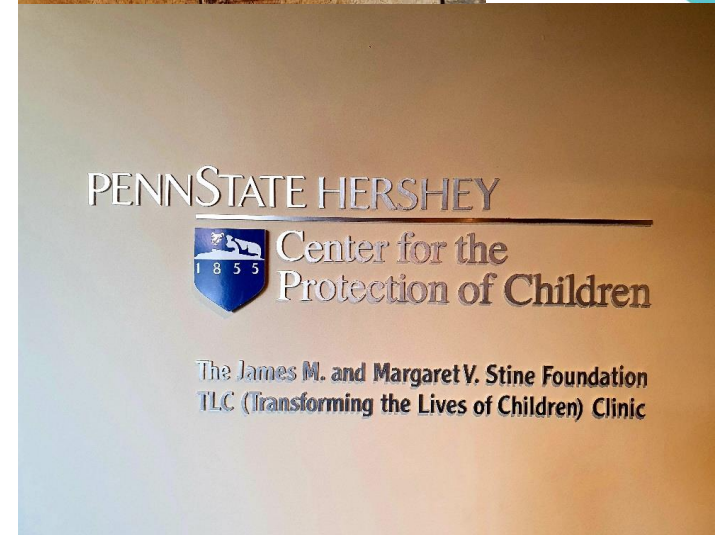
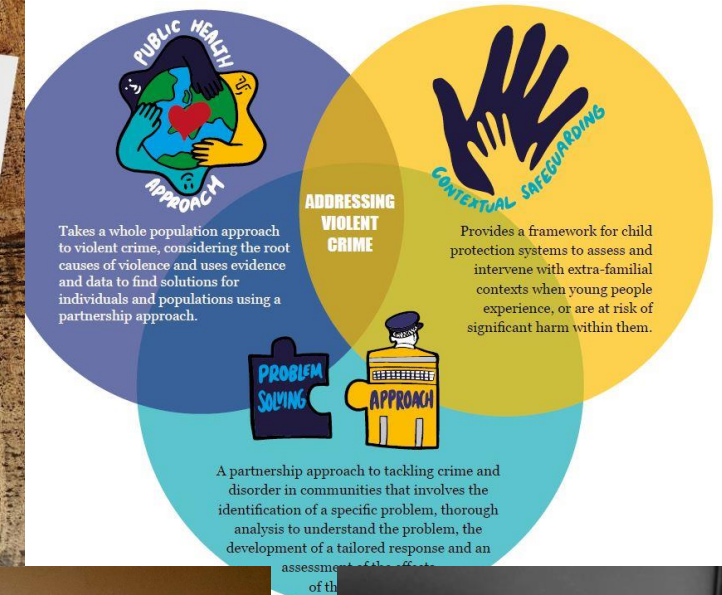
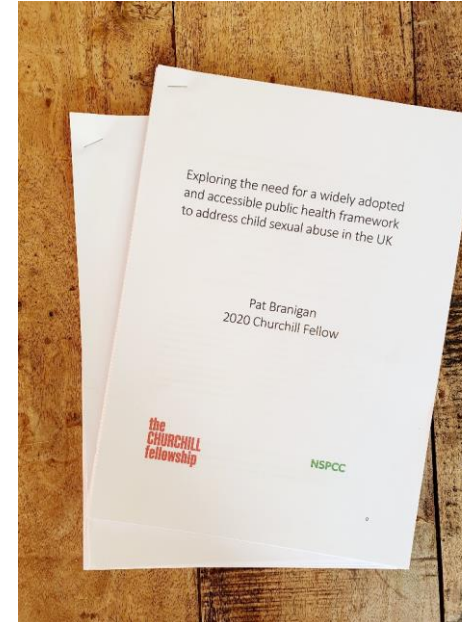


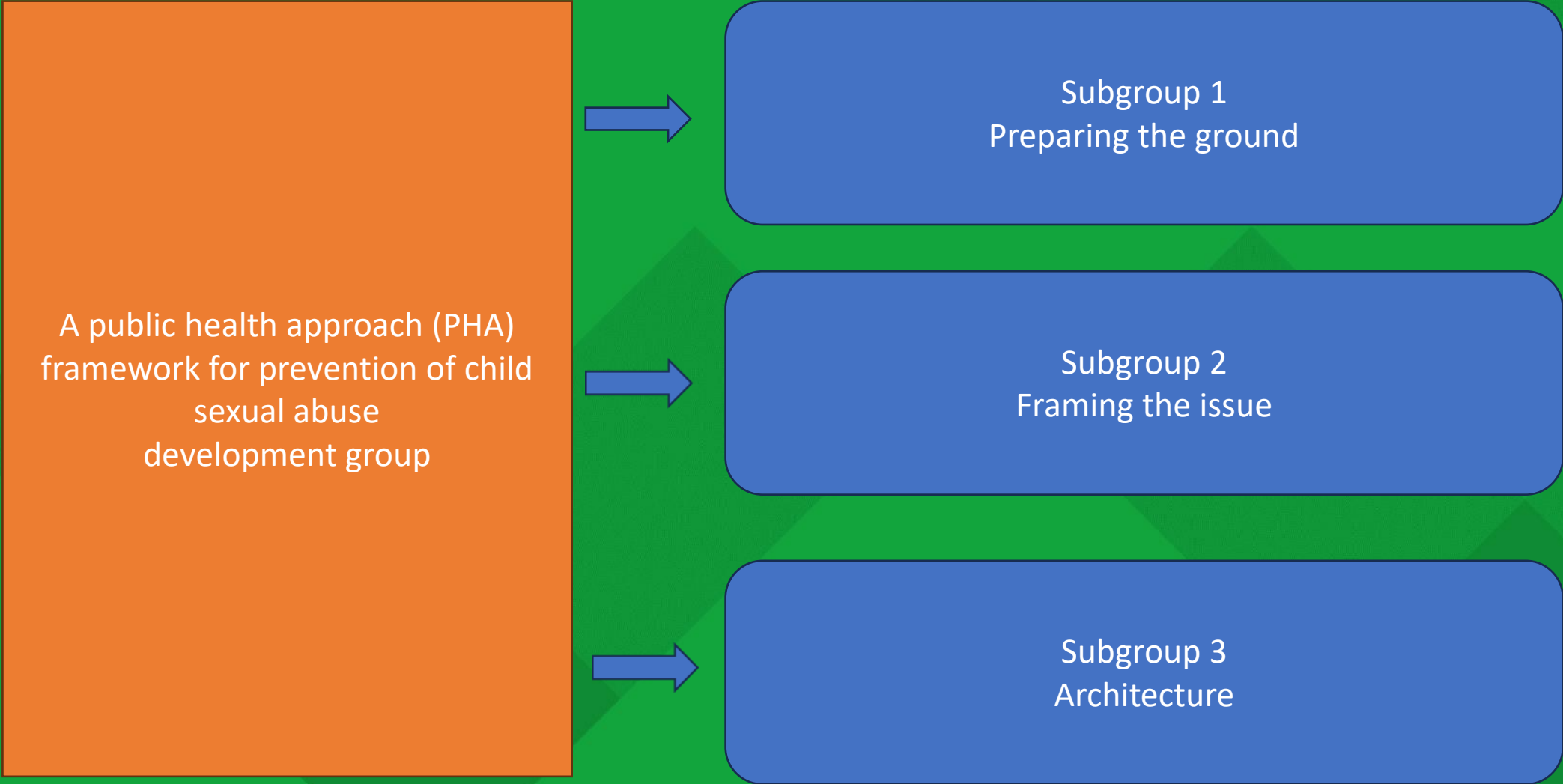
Tackling CSA with public health, USA

cypnow.co.uk • 1 min read

What do we mean by Public Health approach

- Situating child sexual abuse within the personal/familial context (as opposed to the stranger/predator stereotypes)
- Recognising child sexual abuse as a correlate or consequence of other social issues, such as inequality, neglect and education
- Shifting activity, research and policy attention to prevention rather than reaction





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graph LR; A[A public health approach (PHA) framework for prevention of child sexual abuse development group] --> B[Subgroup 1  
Preparing the ground]; A --> C[Subgroup 2  
Framing the issue]; A --> D[Subgroup 3  
Architecture];
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A public health approach (PHA)
framework for prevention of child
sexual abuse
development group

Subgroup 1
Preparing the ground

Subgroup 2
Framing the issue

Subgroup 3
Architecture

Policy sticky issues

- 1) Complexity
- 2) Research and evidence
- 3) Stigma



Subgroup 1

“Preparing the ground”

Purpose:

Outline evidence and need for a public health approach to tackling child sexual abuse in the UK.

Aim:

To develop and collate the “**untranslated**” story of child sexual abuse in the UK – the core content that experts wish to communicate to members of the public

What do we know?

What factors influence child sex abuse?

What factors get in the way of preventing child sexual abuse?

What needs to happen to prevent child sexual abuse?

STATE HERSHEY



Center for the
Protection of Children

The James M. and Margaret V. Stine Foundation
TLC (Transforming the Lives of Children) Clinic

Subgroup 2 “Framing the issue”

Purpose: To develop and frame the issue that child sexual abuse can be prevented

Aim:

- 1) Identify consensus expert and public perspectives about CSA and the differences between these perspectives
- 2) Develop and test communication strategies to align public with expert perspectives
 - To explore the challenges and barriers to prevention of CSA. What do the public see as the *real* barriers/ perceived barriers – potentially focus the reframing work on this to explain how CSA can be prevented

Subgroup 2 “Framing the issue”

Approach to Frame Communications about CSA as a Preventable Public Health Problem

Step 1: Map public-expert gaps in knowledge and understanding

Step 2: Develop and test communication strategies that promote more accurate perspectives

Step 3: Disseminate validated communication strategies

Intended Outcomes from New Validated Communication Strategies

- Increased expert and practitioner knowledge about how to frame views and policies related to CSA prevention
- Increased use of CSA prevention themes by experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders
- Heightened public awareness of CSA as preventable
- Greater media reporting on CSA prevention
- Permanent government support for the development, evaluation, adaptation, and dissemination of effective prevention efforts

Subgroup 3 “Architecture”

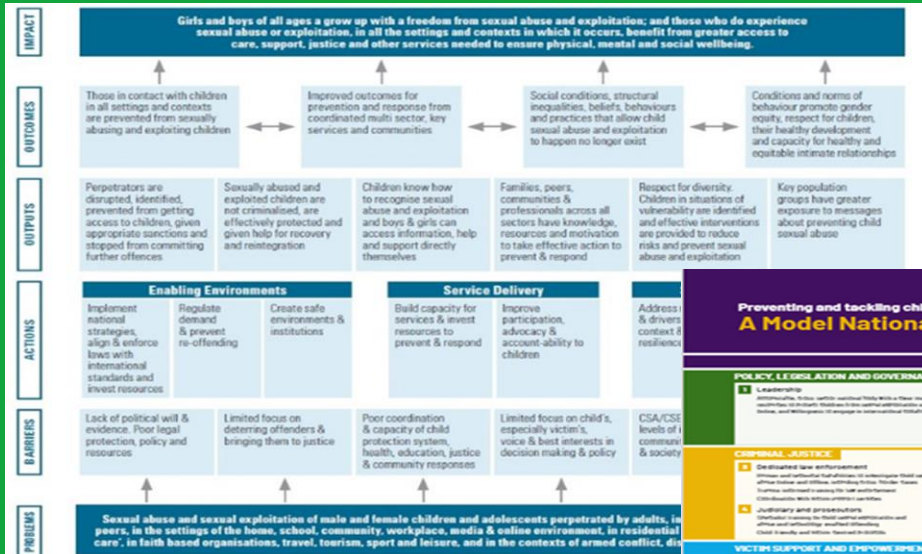
Purpose:

To scope out and design and develop an evidenced informed public health framework for the prevention of child sexual abuse in the UK

Outputs:

- Agree core set of principles for the framework building on work of subgroups 1 and 2
- Underpinning Theory of Change
- Development of the preventative framework for action

Theory of change



Unmet Need

Enabling Factors: Trusted Relationships, Networks of Support, Safe Spaces, etc.

Children & Families

Children & young people may receive conflicting information around relationships, which leads them to develop unclear boundaries and expectations.

Children & young people may not recognise that what is happening to them is abuse, feel unable to speak out or not have the opportunity.

Some parents and carers don't know how to talk to children about healthy relationships or where to go for support.

Some parents and carers don't recognise where support is needed early enough or what to do when they have a concern about their child(ren).

Community

There may be a lack of awareness about some forms of sexual abuse, its impact in communities, and how people should respond to concerns about child sexual abuse.

Communities may not be sufficiently supported to understand the roles they can play in preventing child sexual abuse.

Communities do not feel empowered, and do not have the opportunity, to fulfil their role in ensuring local areas are safe places.

Professionals

Professionals' training may not adequately equip them to identify and respond to signs of child sexual abuse or trauma in children & families.

Professionals may lack confidence and understanding of child sexual abuse, and do not feel empowered to take action because they lack time, space or opportunity.

Professionals may lack confidence and understanding of how to prevent harmful sexual behaviour and do not feel empowered to take action because they lack time, space or opportunity.

Prevalence-less sex and gratified as a whole olds and their

Provide children, young s to confidential support re someone local to turn

se understanding of the ersations about healthy

y relationships and what

ress support/services if abuse.

are concerned about

Support to initiate and enable community-led conversations and education about healthy relationships and develop practical steps to prevent child sexual abuse.

Advice and support for community organisations to help them promote child sexual abuse prevention and healthy relationships.

Awareness raising to help communities agree clear expectations about challenging all forms of concerning sexual behaviour locally.

Community members know what child sexual abuse is and recognise that, by working collectively, sexual abuse can be prevented.

Community members respond appropriately if they have concerns relating to sexual abuse about a child/family.

Trauma and therapeutic relationships training and professional development for all professionals.

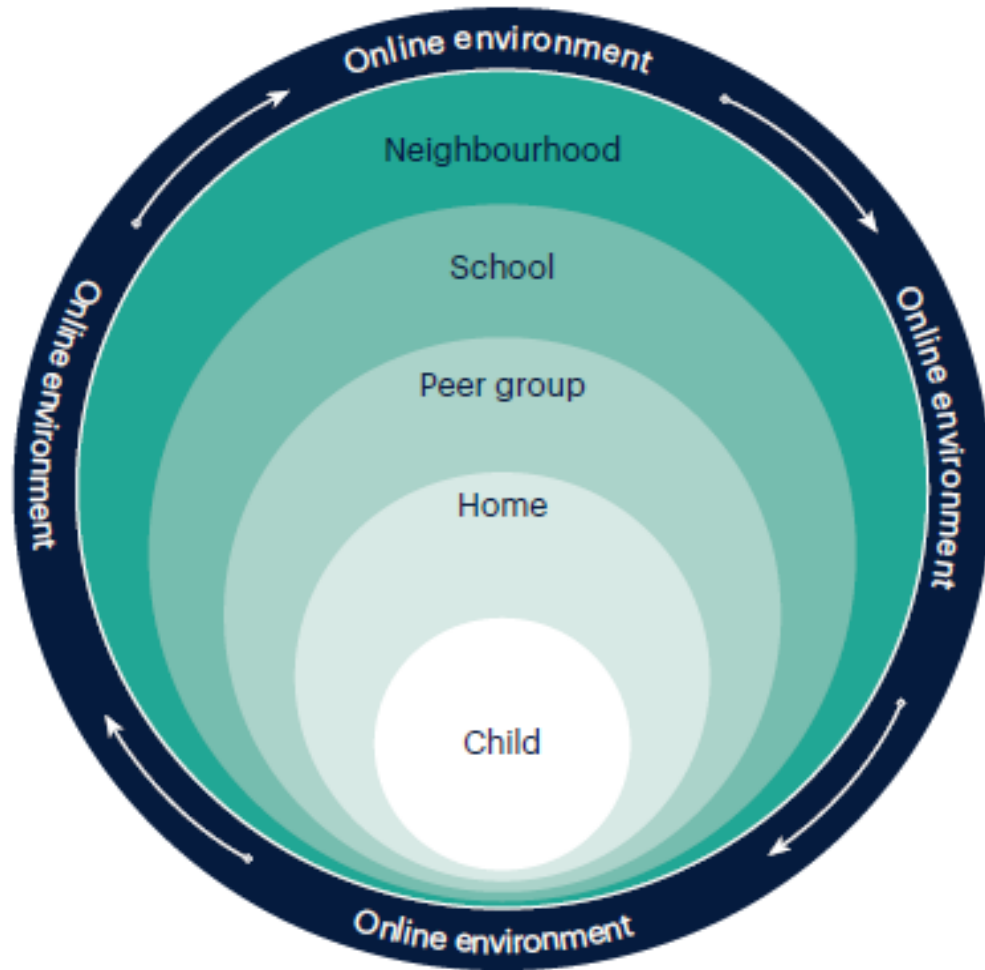
Enhanced access to CSA knowledge and information to increase the confidence of professionals in identifying CSA concerns early and continuing support to explore concerns within an organisational culture which supports them.

Training and professional development to support all professionals to prevent sexual harm and work with children across the continuum of concerning sexual behaviour.

Professionals who work with children are more confident in identifying, addressing and preventing child sexual abuse

The prevention of child sexual ab

Contextual Safeguarding



Firmin, 2017

- Recognises harm outside family home and goes beyond individual risk factors
- Target: prevent, identify, assess, and intervene with the social conditions of abuse
- Legislation: incorporate extra-familial contexts into child protection frameworks
- Partnerships: with sectors/individuals responsible for the nature of extra-familial contexts
- Outcome measures: monitor outcomes for success in relation to contextual, as well as individual change

Existing frameworks

Eradicating Child Sexual Abuse (ECSA) framework

	Primary prevention	Secondary prevention	Tertiary prevention
Offenders and potential offenders			
Children and young people (victims)			
Families and communities			
Situations			

Source: [Lucy Faithfull Foundation](#)

HSB framework and audit

Framework structure and how to use it

The framework promotes five domains (areas of focus) that cover the essential elements of developing and delivering an integrated and effective HSB service for children, young people and their families. These five key domains are closely interrelated:



1

Responses

A continuum of responses to children and young people displaying HSB

2

Prevention

Prevention, identification and early intervention

3

Assessment

Effective assessment and referral pathways

4

Interventions

Multi-modal approach to intervention

5

Development

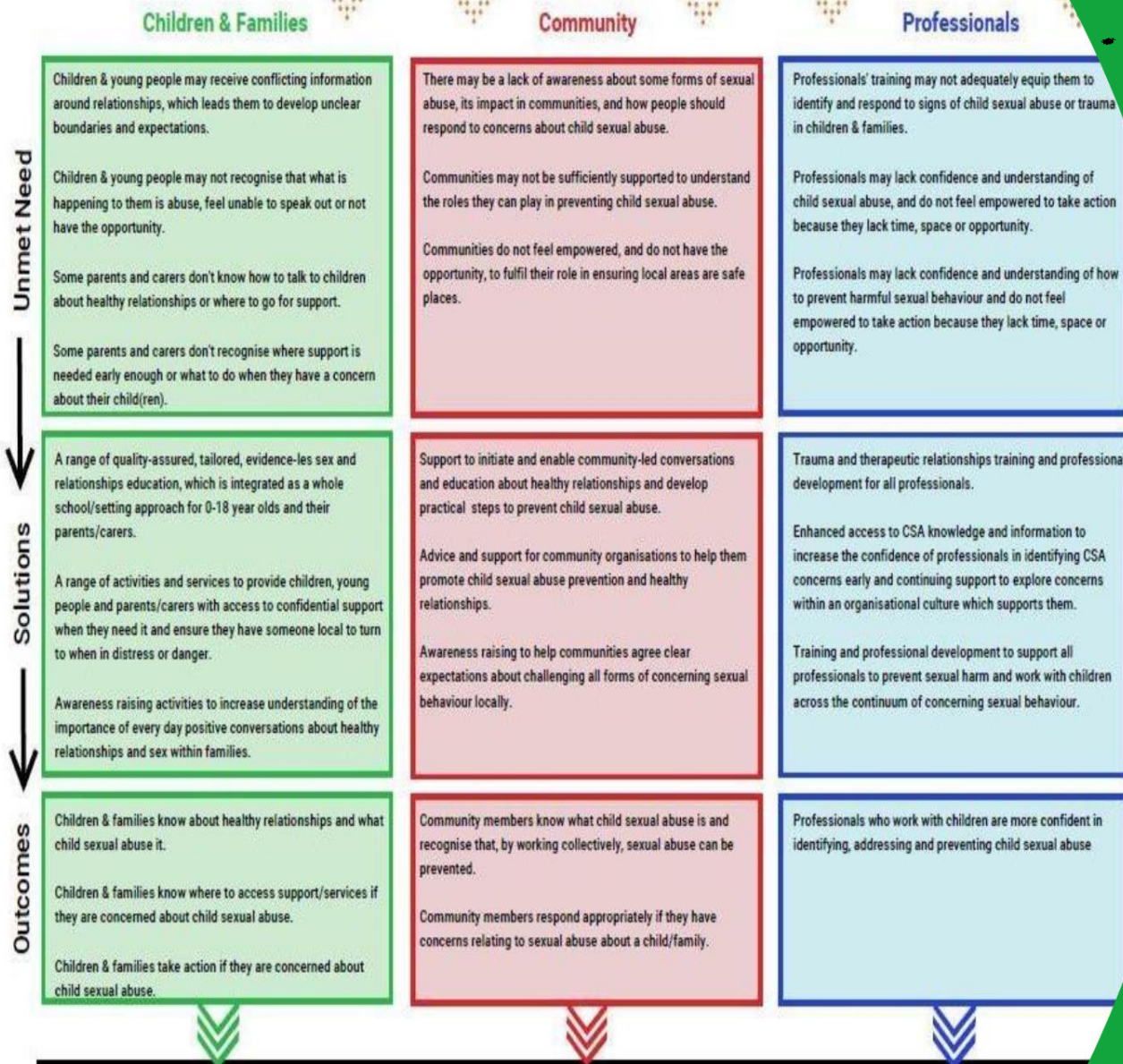
Workforce development

Together for childhood

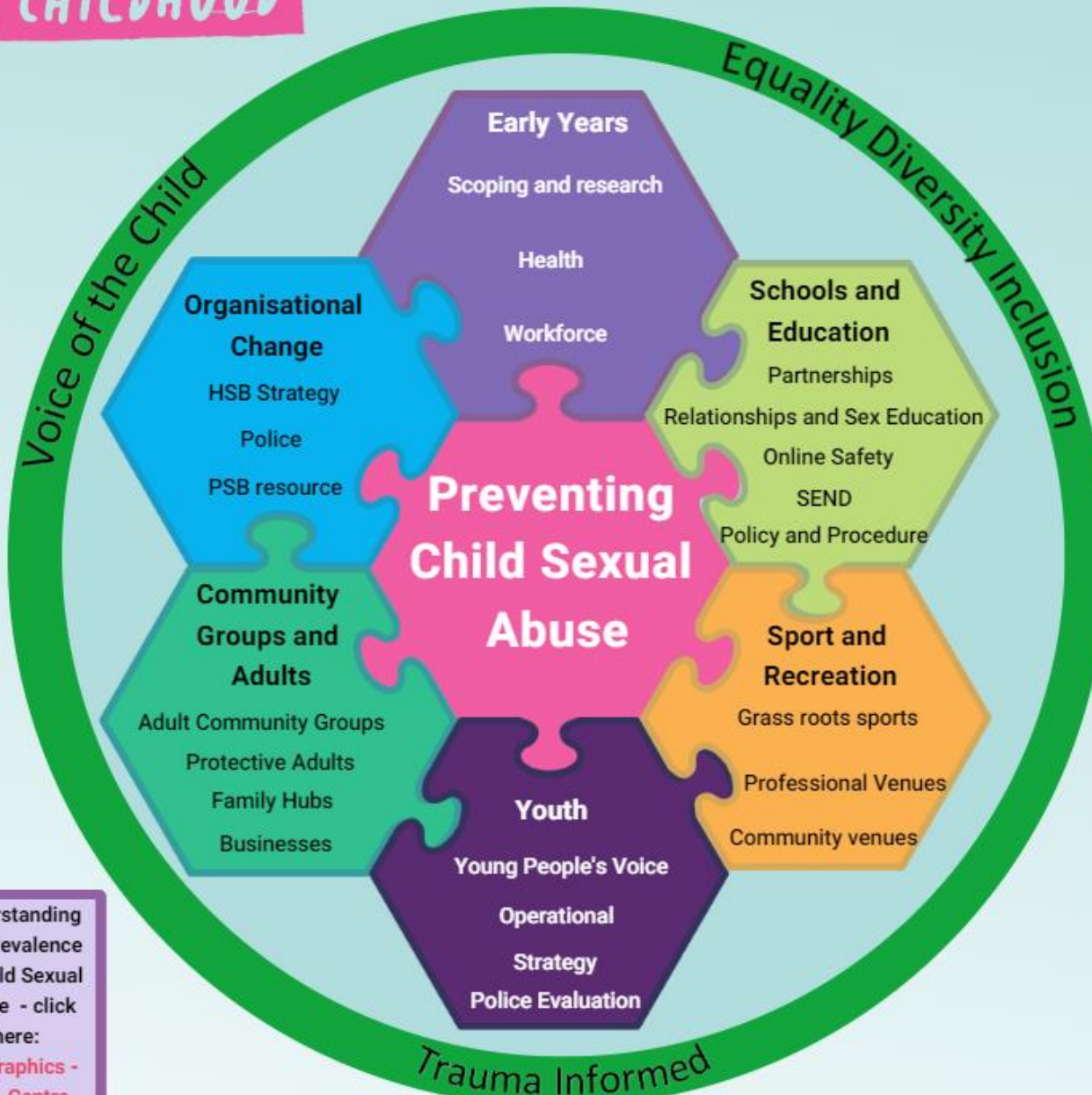


forms of child sexual abuse including intra-familial abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, child sexual exploitation and online abuse by working in partnership with children and young people. The approach will also be informed by a specific core location to develop an inclusive, strength based, sustainable and evidence based approach to preventing child sexual abuse. The approach will also be informed by a specific core location to develop an inclusive, strength based, sustainable and evidence based approach to preventing child sexual abuse.

Enabling Factors: Trusted Relationships, Networks of Support, Safe Spaces, Inclusive Environments



The prevention of child sexual abuse



Media



We worked to agree press releases in both areas and took part in a press conference in Plymouth.

Coverage included:



Stop It Now! website impact



1. During 7-20 Feb, **Stop It Now!** website **users from Plymouth increased by 482%** from the two previous weeks (from 87 to 507 users) and sessions increased by 436% (from 107 to 573).
 - **Get Help** also saw an increase in users from Plymouth during this period by **171%** from the two previous weeks (from 31 to 84) and sessions increased by 196% (from 26 to 77).

2. During 1-25 March, **Stop It Now!** website **users from Staffordshire increased by 376%** from the previous time period (from 244 to 1,162 users) and sessions increased by 381% (from 288 to 1,384).
 - **Get Help** also saw an increase in users from Staffordshire during this period by **314%** from the two previous weeks (from 95 to 393) and sessions increased by 258% (from 113 to 405).

Do you want to know more?

NOTA Newsletter and NOTA International Conference May 2025 Belfast

One Talk at a time – Australian CSA prevention work

Johns Hopkins narrative weblink: [Scalability | Deep Dive | Prevention Global](#)

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