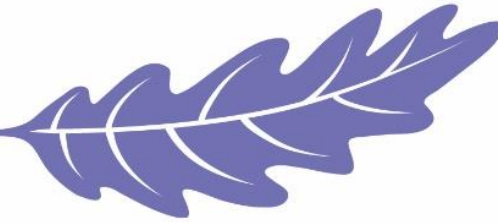


Purple Leaf



Practitioner Forum

Sibling Sexual Abuse Project

Background

This assessment tool is designed to support practitioners in both the identification of the presence of Sibling Sexual Abuse (SSA) and the appropriate support or intervention for the Child or Young Person (CYP), and their support network, where SSA has been identified.

It is one of the project outputs of the Home Office and Ministry of Justice funded Rape Crisis England and Wales (RCEW) **Sibling Sexual Abuse : supporting victims and survivors to recover, heal and rebuild their lives.**

It has been developed following an extensive research process including engagement with survivors and a range of practitioners. It is supported by academic research, has been piloted by practitioners and overseen by a service user steering group.

Project approach and process

What the CYP project involved:

- Discussion with all RCC's about current provision for CYP
- Interviews with CYP's
- Literature review
- National roll out of assessment tool
- Interviews with 30 professionals
- Introductory workshops for RCC's
- Piloting of assessment tool with 5 centres
- Designing assessment tool
- Case Reviews

Research findings





What is Sibling Sexual Abuse

A reminder – What is Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This may involve physical contact or non-contact activities and can happen online or offline (Department for Education, 2018; Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2019).

Children and young people may not always understand that they are being sexually abused.

Who is a sibling?

- The research carried out for this project found that careful consideration needed to be given to defining what a sibling means (Yates and Allardyce, 2021).
- Children and families may identify a range of family members as siblings – including, and not limited to, half siblings, step siblings, cousins who have a sibling relationship with the child or foster and adopted siblings.

What makes sibling sexual abuse different?

- Yates and Allardyce (2021) describe ‘Sibling Sexual behaviour’ as the umbrella term that refers to any form of sexual behaviour between siblings.
- Not all sibling sexual behaviour may be abusive.
- Yates and Allardyce (2021) divide sibling sexual abuse into three broad categories:
 - Normative sexual interactions between siblings (that which is within expected developmental norms)
 - Inappropriate or problematic sexual behaviours between siblings (that which falls outside of developmental norms and may cause harm)
 - Sibling Sexual Abuse – behaviour that causes ‘sexual, physical and emotional harm including sexually abusive behaviour which involves violence’

Prevalence

‘Sexual abuse involving child siblings is thought to be the most common form of intra-familial child sexual abuse, perhaps up to three times as common as sexual abuse of a child by a parent.’

What is harmful sexual behaviour ?

- Harmful sexual behaviour can be defined as :
- *“Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult”* (Hackett, 2010)

Who will use this tool ?

The tool is designed to be used by **a practitioner** that is working with a child/young person (CYP) that has experienced child sexual abuse.

Purpose of the tool

To identify whether a child or young person (CYP) is a survivor of sibling sexual abuse (SSA); has experienced sexually inappropriate or problematic behaviour from a sibling or/and behaved towards a sibling in a way that is sexually inappropriate or problematic; or have exhibited sexually abusive behaviours towards another sibling

To inform practitioner approach to risk management, support, and intervention with the CYP

To identify any additional needs or support for the wider family of the CYP and refer them to the appropriate agency (the research that underpins the assessment tool indicates that having an awareness of the family context is key to interventions and outcomes for CYP)

To identify and escalate any safeguarding concerns

Tool principles

This tool is based on a number of good practice principles which include:

Family context

Consent and information sharing

Safeguarding

Trauma informed approach

Communication

Gathering relevant and necessary information

Use of appropriate language

Complexity

What the assessment tool involves

- Gathering initial referral information
- Summary of issues and concerns that have led to the referral
- Recognise strengths and protective factors
- Identify risk factors and needs
- Family engagement, response and support
- Actions and recommendations

Next Steps

- Attending training session
- Copies of the tool and guidance to be provided
- Start using the tool
- Guidance and support from Purple Leaf
- Support evaluation of the tool

Thank you

Purple Leaf

