

Child Sexual Abuse Strategy "Think the Unthinkable" 2021

Interim strategy will be updated upon completion of Section 11 Safeguarding Audit of all Camden Schools May — Oct 2021. This is in light of the spotlight on the culture of sexual violence and harassment in schools and the subsequent Ofsted review.

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1. Introduction

Camden is committed to improve the outcomes for children and young people who are victims of child sexual abuse (CSA) and this includes child sexual exploitation (CSE). The aim is to implement a borough prevention strategy, and to improve the identification, protection and support for the survivors and their families.

Despite the research and policy initiatives over the years, there continues to be a vast difference between the identification of sexual abuse in children and young people and the numbers disclosing CSA in adulthood¹. Research² suggests 1 in 20 children in the UK may have been sexually abused. Many adults report that they did try to say what was happening to them as children, in actions if not in words, but that were not heard (*Children's Commissioner's Inquiry's in into Child Sexual Abuse in the family environment (2015)*.

Ofsted thematic Inspection Report into *Child sexual abuse in the family environment* ³ recommended that CSA should be priority area, "as too often, responses leave children repeatedly victimised, perpetrators unidentified". The inspectorate has recommended the promotion of CSA strategies.

The successful implementation of the Camden strategy depends on a cultural change in which the workforce, volunteers, parents and carers develop the confidence to "think the unthinkable" especially in the context of complex and vulnerable families. The Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) will lead the implementation of the strategy by ensuring there is a multi-agency commitment and joint response.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited, they are often given things, including gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they are in a loving and consensual relationship. This is called grooming. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they are being abused.

¹ https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/statistics-briefings/child-sexual-abuse

² https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/statistics-briefings/child-sexual-abuse

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-inspections-of-the-response-to-child-sexual-abuse-in-the-family-environment

2. Background

In August 2016 a CSA Task & Finish Group, under the Camden Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) addressed the findings in *Children's Commissioner's Inquiry's in into Child Sexual Abuse in the family environment (2015)* and to build on our existing strategies for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). This group took forward work on raising awareness of CSA across front line services by holding multi-agency conferences and a school's pilot training programme focusing on improving staff's confidence to identify and respond to CSA.

In October 2018, the Lighthouse service⁴ which brings together medical, investigative, therapeutic and advocacy services for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse and/ or exploitation was set up in Camden. This Lighthouse partnership facility provides a safe space to support children and young people, (aged 0-18), in their recovery from sexual abuse and/or exploitation. It also supports adults aged 18-25 with learning disabilities https://www.thelighthouse-london.org.uk/

Our CSA Task & Finish Group was refreshed in 2019 and further planning took place to arrange a further multi-agency conference, which focused on:

- Update on the national and local picture
- The role of the Lighthouse and emerging CSA themes
- Understand how trauma informed practice influences work with children, young people and their families.

Participants identified how the CSCP could support them to address the challenges of CSA. They recommended a CSA strategy that would guide work to raise awareness, prevent CSA and to improve the support offered to victims/survivors.

In 2021, the Home Office published its first Child Sexual Abuse Strategy and commissioned a report into best practice in CSA resulting in the Spreading Excellence Report in March 2021. This report details commissioning and service provision to meet the needs of children and young people that experience Child Sexual Abuse.

⁴ NHS England has commissioned the health and wellbeing services which will be provided by University College London Hospitals (UCLH), The Tavistock and Portman and NSPCC, supported by Morgan Stanley

3. Definition of Child Sexual Abuse

For the purposes of this document the definition includes CSE. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 definition states "child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not perpetrated solely by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children."

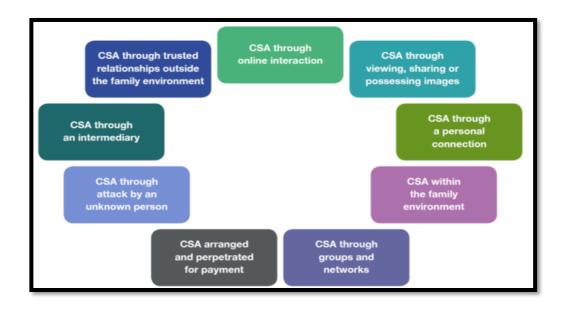
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of CSA.

"It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something that the victim needs or wants, and or (b) for the finical advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitators. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child Sexual Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

For further information on our approach to CSE please refer to our Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy. https://cscp.org.uk/resources/child-sexual-exploitation-resources/

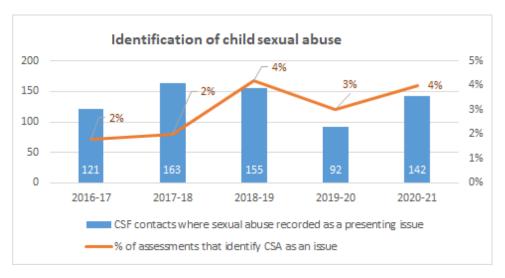
The Centre of child expertise on child sexual abuse in collaboration with the Centre for abuse and trauma studies, Middlesex University 2020⁵ have devised a classification which sets out nine different patterns of child sexual abuse offending. This broad picture of offending helps understand the many different ways in which the child and young person maybe experiencing sexual abuse. Types of Child Sexual Abuse:

⁵ https://www.csacentre.org.uk/documents/new-typology-of-child-sexual-abuse-offending/



4. Camden's CSA Profile in 2019-20

The table below shows local trends in identifying child sexual abuse over recent years. 2019-20 saw a 40% drop in CSF contact where sexual abuse was recorded as a presenting issue, however numbers resumed to previous years' averages in 2020-21. The percentage of assessments that identify CSA as an issue also returned to 2018/19 levels (4%).

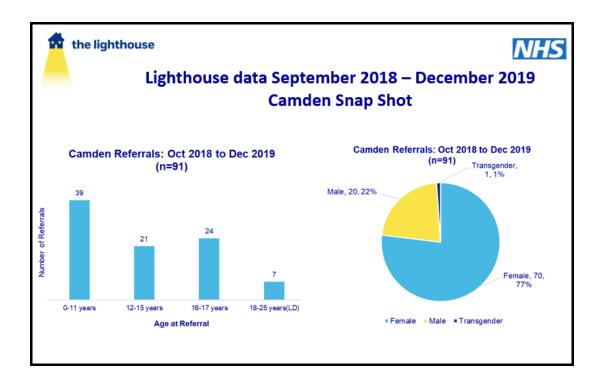


For 2020-21, the total number of children subject to CP plans due to concerns around sexual abuse is under 1 (rate per 10,000 of the children and young people population) which is consistent with previous years.

The Lighthouse opened in Camden in October 2018 following the challenges raised by the Children's Commissioner Inquiries in 2017 and 2015 and also the Review of the pathway after child sexual abuse in London ⁶.

The tables below shows the Lighthouse data in the first 15 months of its operation. The cohort of under 11 year old cohort had the highest number of referrals in terms of the identification of the abuse and support offered. More than three-quarters of the referrals were relating to girls which might suggest that more work needs to be done around helping the identification of sexual abuse amongst boys.

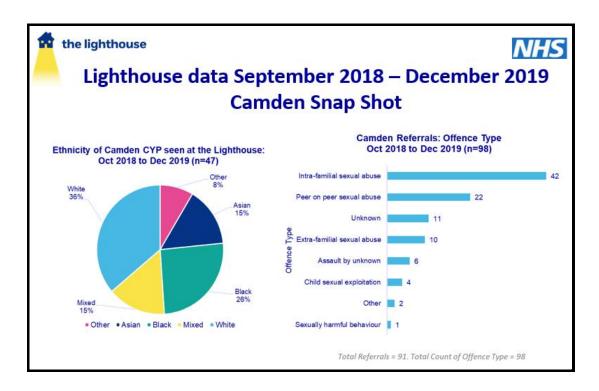
The <u>Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse</u> 2021 – Engagement Report found that disclosure can be particularly difficult for victims and survivors from ethnic minority communities. Therefore it is noteworthy that, 74% of the children and young people seen at the Lighthouse were from black, Asian and minority ethnicities, which is disproportionate to Camden ethnicity demographics – where 34% are from black or minority ethnic groups⁷. This will be an area of focus to ensure safeguarding services and practice is both inclusive and accessible.



⁶ Review of pathway following sexual assault for children and young people in London

The Havens, Kings College Hospital London On behalf of NHS England. Dr Andrea Goddard, Emma Harewood, Dr Lauren Brennan (2015)

⁷ The 2011 Census provides the most comprehensive and detailed information about Camden and is supplemented by various survey estimates and administrative counts

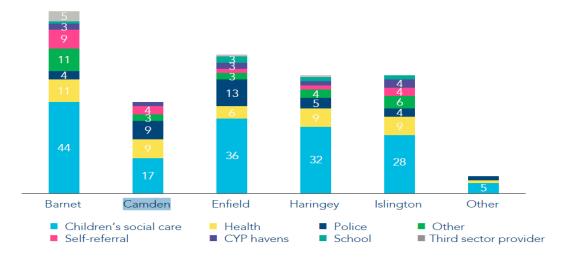


Intra-familial sexual abuse, followed by peer on peer sexual abuse make up the majority of sexual abuse offence types referred to the Lighthouse.

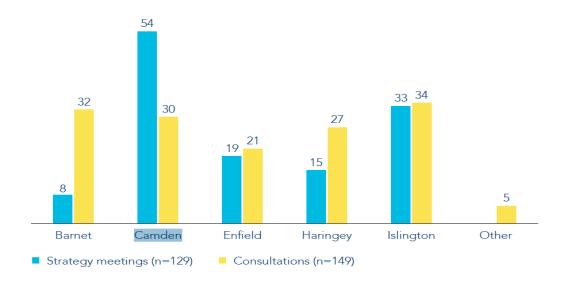
73% of as sexual offences in the borough of children and young people were referred to the Lighthouse, which is significantly higher than other than other four North London boroughs who refer to the Lighthouse.

In the second year of delivering services, on average 30 children and young people are referred to the service per month across NCL, this was sustained during the pandemic. Awareness of the service is evidenced through the number of professional consultations taking place, 149 over 2020 compared with 41 in 2019.

The graph below evidences the multi-agency engagement and commitment to ensure that children at risk are appropriately referred:



The CSCP was offered assurance that although Camden has slightly lower number of referrals, the number of strategy meetings taking place are higher compared to NCL boroughs.



22% of the NCL cohort were recorded as having a disability, which is double that of the previous year and demonstrates the Lighthouse's commitment to ensuring all children and young people have access to the service.

The new social care liaison role continued to develop the consultancy and training offer over 2020, expanding the training support to include spotting the signs of child sexual exploitation and supporting children with sexual harmful behaviour. The consultancy offer has been expanded beyond referring social workers and is now available in conjunction with paediatricians or the health and wellbeing team to support local CAMHS, GPs and community paediatricians. The Social Care Liaison Officer offers one to one support to local social workers, providing tools for direct work and support to engage children and young people to identify signs and elicit disclosures of child sexual abuse.

Creating Child Friendly Justice

In order to ensure that children are well supported to go through the often-traumatising criminal justice process in cases of child sexual abuse, children receiving a service from the Lighthouse are offered an advocate. Across the NCL cohort, 201 children were supported by advocacy services and 295 children engaged in therapeutic support. In order to reduce levels of re-traumatisation, psychology led video recorded interviews (VRI) are offered alongside live links to crown court for remote or pre-recorded cross-examination and joint

work with registered intermediaries. The Lighthouse now meets with the Police Safeguarding Leads in each borough every quarter to optimise the referrals for psychology led interviews. This has resulted in an increase in police led VRI's taking place. In order to minimise case delays, joint work takes place with Met Police and Crown Prosecution Service by tracking all open cases and escalating case delays were needed.

Out of 684 referrals to the Lighthouse across NCL, 17 cases have gone to court and outcomes cannot be published in this report due to small numbers. Multi-agency colleagues are being trained in the criminal justice system in order to reduce and understand the impact of trauma on children in the justice process and also dispelling the myths about the medical examination and the restorative nature of a health appointment.

Engaging with families

Supporting parents can enable better outcomes for children. New to 2020, the Lighthouse have established a parent forum which provides a place for parents to connect with each other, receive information and provide feedback. The service also has a parent course; Parent Psychoeducation which helped parents not feel alone and finds ways to resolve difficult situations, outcomes include 69% of parents achieving their goals.

A new, Young People's forum has also been established which provides a place for young people to share feedback or consultation about the Lighthouse service. Children and young people achieved or partially achieved 96% of their goals. The Young People's forum prompted the Lighthouse to make changes including co-creating a leaflet for young people written by young people, adding the voices of young people to the website and identifying a practitioner to speak to them by phone before the appointment.

5. Vision Statement for CSA/ CSE

- Prevent the threat and immediate and long-term harm of sexual abuse to children and young people
- Aim for early identification with child friendly and timely responses, and include holistic assessments which identify needs and risks.
- All services to" Think the Unthinkable" and to assess the possibility of CSA in their contacts with children, young people, families, parents and carers.

- Remember polyvictimisation of children/ young people and family complexities
- Identify and protect the children and young people vulnerable to CSA/CSE.
- Offer interventions to reduce the long-term impacts and prevent recurrence.
- Use the contextual safeguarding approach⁸

6. Aim:

In order to underpin this strategy, Camden is using the six-pillar approach, as does the Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy, and includes:

Prevent, identify, support, disrupt, enforce

Prevent: CSA by providing children and young people with information that helps them understand what CSA is in an age-appropriate way, and helps them understand that it is wrong for others to do this to them. Help them understand what they can do if they are worried in order to keep themselves safe, and create an environment in which children and adults are able to talk about sexual abuse more easily9. Providing children and young people with knowledge and skills through age-appropriate ongoing high quality relationships and sex education from an early age; it should help them understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy (including coercive and abusive) relationships, the complexities of consent and where to seek advice and help. Normalising conversations about sex and relationships will help create an environment in which children and adults are able to talk about sexual abuse more easily.

Identify: and refer children and young people who are vulnerable to or allege (including nonverbally /behaviourally) CSA, who might be targeted or are being groomed and so need help and support. Listen and hear the children/ young people and their safe carer, believe their story whilst keeping an open mind.

Support & engage: survivors of CSA enabling them to access therapies in order to mitigate the short and long-term impact of abuse. Address any issues that make children/young people vulnerable to CSA and prevent them from becoming exposed to any future abuse.

⁸ https://www.csnetwork.org.uk/en/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-inspections-of-the-response-to-child-sexual-abuse-in-thefamily-environment

Disrupt: the patterns of CSA and make Camden a safe environment for children and young people by interrupting the activities of perpetrators and inhibiting the targeting and grooming process. Stop suspected or convicted perpetrators grooming vulnerable adults in order to target children and young people.

Enforce: alleged perpetrators by using information and intelligence gathered by partner agencies.

7. How we do this:

The Lighthouse - Co-ordinated support for children who have been sexually abused

The Lighthouse is the first service of its kind in the UK and is located in Camden. The Lighthouse is a multi-agency service for children and young people who have experienced any form of sexual abuse, including exploitation. It offers a child-centred approach, providing guidance and support to help children and young people recover. https://www.thelighthouse-london.org.uk/ The Lighthouse has trained specialists who work in a interdisciplinary team in the same building to make sure children and their families receive the support they need. Some of the services it provides include:

Advocacy

Advocates guide children, young people and their families through their journey of recovery, helping them access the support they need at every step, including the court process.

Medical support

Undergoing medical examinations can be traumatic for children who have experienced abuse. At The Lighthouse, a play specialist helps the child prepare for medical assessments, which are carried out by a paediatrician and supported by a nurse. The child or young person can choose whether to have the assessment on their own or with a trusted adult present.

Criminal justice

If a child has been sexually abused, a specially trained police officer should conduct an Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interview with them to gather the facts of the case and the evidence for prosecuting the perpetrator. At The Lighthouse this interview can be conducted by a clinical psychologist who is supported by a police officer. This helps reduce retraumatisation whilst still achieving the best possible evidence.

Emotional support

Having emotional support and therapy can help children start to recover from the abuse they have experienced. The Lighthouse prioritises children's emotional needs with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) practitioners providing early and long-term emotional support to children and young people. Their therapeutic services, <u>Letting the Future</u> In and <u>Protect and Respect</u> are also available to children and young people.

Liaising with other services

The Lighthouse has police liaison officers and social care liaison officers who offer advice and liaise with the local police, children's social care services and multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH). Their specialist teams also train the children's workforce to help them identify CSA early, particularly vulnerable children such as those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) so that early preventative support can be provided.

Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership -

- provides robust safeguarding and child protection systems and procedures to support multi-agency working and information sharing in order to help children to feel safe to disclose and ensure staff can identify and respond appropriately;
- works with colleagues across the council such as Licencing and Community Safety, to
 ensure Camden is a safe environment for children and young people, particularly in
 relation to the night-time economy;
- working with sports and leisure to improve safeguarding practice in after school provision;
- recognising that Black Asian Minority Ethnic children and those with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) may face extra barriers in disclosing or accessing support and making efforts to address this and raise awareness of CSA;
- recognising that child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of CSA and ensuring links between the CSE and CSA strategies.

Schools -

- provide a preventative service through good quality RHSE and PHSE to promote healthy relationships;
- tackle peer on peer abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and sexual violence and harassment within the school environment in line with Keeping Children Safe in education
 - Strong local **MAPPA** processes are in place with Police, Probation, Health and Social Care to ensure offenders are risk managed and prevented from re-offending and to protect children;

All agencies have robust staffing policies to ensure a safe children's workforce through robust safe recruitment practices, ongoing monitoring and rapid response to allegations or concerns via the LADO so that people who are unsuitable to work with children are barred from entering the workforce.

Online safety is promoted in the following ways:

- professionals, parents and children are provided with information and guidance to help them keep children safe online, particularly during remote learning
- schools have safe systems and policies and procedures in place to reduce online risk and teach pupils how to stay safe online
- all IT and online safety systems and policies are continually monitored and updated regularly to keep abreast with changing technology and how this may change the nature of online abuse

The impact of Covid 19

The CSCP is also aware of the impact of Covid 19 on CSA and the potential increased risk of harm due to lockdown where vulnerable children may not be seen by the professional network and increased online learning can lead to an increased risk of online abuse.

Culture of sexual violence and harassment in schools

In light of the spotlight on the culture of child sexual abuse and harassment in schools, the CSCP is working closely with Camden Learning on a mandatory Section 11 Safeguarding Audit of all Camden Maintained, Academies, Free and Independent Schools through May – Oct 2021. To demonstrate compliance and a culture of safeguarding, all schools are required to complete this audit, providing evidence and examples against questions/statements.

8. Action Plan

Prevent

Outcome Ensuring that Camden's workforce and families have an increase awareness and understanding of CSA. Measure the percent of the workforce who receive training for CSA/ and talking to children and young people about relationships and sex. To ensure that it remains part of the curriculum delivered in schools and communities settings so that children and young people understand what CSA is, understand the meaning of consent and how it should be sought and how they may be targeted measure how many schools include this in their teaching. Ensure that healthy and unhealthy relationships (incl. CSA), consent and sex are part of a wider high quality relationships and sex education curriculum delivered in schools and community youth settings. Support professionals working with children and young people develop confidence in talking to children and young people about sex, relationships and consent on a regular basis and create an open and safe environment where these conversations are normalised. This will be achieved by:

Action	Lead
Providing information to all those in contact with children	CSCP
especially teachers, parents and communities to help them to	Snr Health and Wellbeing
understand these risks, recognise the indicators of CSA, and	Advisor for schools
take appropriate action;	
Focussing on early identification and providing early help and	Head of Early Help
aligning CSA support to Camden's Early Help Strategy;	
Providing on-going training through the CSCP for	CSCP
professionals who may be in contact with children and young	
people who display heightened vulnerability.	
Building on delivery of RSE and CSA in PSHE education	Snr Health and Wellbeing
programme to raise awareness	Advisor for schools
Ensuring the multi-agency CSA guidance is updated to include	QA Subgroup
new research and promotes a contextual approach and a	
shared model for assessing risk;	
Ensure professionals working at all levels of need have access	L&D
to expert advice and consultation, and understand their duty to	Subgroup
identify vulnerability and risk, and ensure children and young	
people are provided with appropriate information and support.	

•	Raise awareness of CSA through CSCP and our partner's	CSCP
	websites, newsletters and any support events or initiatives and	NCL CCG
	include in MA training.	MPS

Identify

Outcome There is an increase in CSA disclosures

- There is an increase in the number of substantiated disclosures
- There is an increase in the number unsubstantiated disclosures
- Children and young people know who to tell/ disclose CSA

This will be achieved by:

Action	Lead
Listening to the voice of the child and share the information	All and embedded in
	training
Ensuring that all practitioners are trained to listen,	MA training from the
recognise and respond to CSA.	partnership
Seeking assurance that CSA latest guidance and research	Partnership to ensure this
is covered in partner training programs	is on the website
Children and young people exhibiting early signs of	All professionals
sexually harmful behaviours will be identified, assessed	
and provided with appropriate interventions, such as early	
help	
Empower parents, communities and to identify to	All professionals
recognise and respond to CSA.	
Ensure professionals working at all levels have access to	All Managers
expert advice, supervision and consultation	
Use Signs of safety tools to help identification of CSA.	All professionals
Ensuring Childline is advertised across the borough.	All agencies/ CSCP

Support

Outcome: being able to demonstrate a positive change for when support has been given to survivors and family. This will be achieved by:

Action	Lead
Services being delivered in a meaningful and timely	QA Subgroup
fashion.	

•	Equity of access and a tailored approach for all including	Lighthouse
	boys, young children, children from BAME communities	ŭ
	and those with a disability	
	·	
•	Services that meet the needs of the individual child or	Lighthouse
	young person and their family/carer, including a creative	
	and trauma informed approach for up to 24 sessions.	
•	Multi-agency consultation and initial assessments by the	Lighthouse
	Lighthouse will provide expert guidance and support	
	decision making that enables professionals to share	
	information support and develop a plan of support.	
•	A model of best practice to support children and young	Lighthouse
	people who have been sexually abused will be provided by	
	the Lighthouse including holistic medical, sexual health,	
	therapeutic and children and young people's advocacy	
	services	
•	Support plans which are evaluated based on feedback	Lighthouse
	from children/ young people and their families, measuring	
	progress against co-produced goals and other outcome	
	measures.	
•	Receiving feedback from children/ young people, from	Lighthouse
	parents/carers and from residents about the advice,	
	guidance and support they receive will be positive.	
•	A model of multi-agency working enabling the effective	Lighthouse
	sharing of information and building up a picture of	
	intelligence for each case against the context of the local	
	area profile.	
•	The impact of CSA on children/ young people who have	Lighthouse
	received treatment will be mitigated.	
•	Number of children/ young people receiving support from	Lighthouse
	specialist services who show an improvement in health and	
	wellbeing and school attendance	
	Disrupt and prosecute:	l

Disrupt and prosecute:

Outcome: The number

- Of civil orders prosecutions achieved against perpetrators will increase.
- Criminal prosecutions achieved against perpetrators will increase.

This will be achieved by:		
Action	Lead	
Ensuring the CSCP and Camden uses its full powers to	Statutory Safeguarding	
disrupt and prosecute perpetrators.	Partners	
Reviewing the disruption and prosecution strategy based	Statutory Safeguarding	
on local and national learning;	Partners	
Using MASH to share information and host a data set of	Statutory Safeguarding	
victims and perpetrators;	Partners	
Provide guidance and training to key professionals which	Learning & Development	
improves the quality of evidence gathering and recording;	Subgroup	
Ensuring that there is accessible, consistent, and long-term	Lighthouse	
support by child and young people's ISVAs (independent		
sexual violence advocates) for victims throughout the		
investigation, prosecution and post-court;		
Developing a strategic overview of the progress of	Statutory Safeguarding	
investigations;	Partners	
Supporting a multi- agency approach to developing plans;	QA Subgroup	
Developing links to the specialist police resources to	Safeguarding Lead for the	
escalate cases and draw on external resource.	Police	
Enabling timely investigation and charging decisions	Statutory Safeguarding	
through sharing of third party information	Partners	
Enabling timely prosecution and trials through enhanced	Safeguarding Lead for the	
communication with the criminal justice system	Police	
The Police and probation services will share information	Safeguarding Lead for the	
about alleged perpetrator and persons of interest with	Police	
Children's Social Care.		
Where CSA cases do not meet thresholds for intervention,	All professionals	
professionals will sustain curiosity and challenge areas of		
uncertainty.		

9. References

- Centre of expertise on Child Sexual Abuse a new typology of sexual abuse offending March 2020
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- https://www.csnetwork.org.uk/en/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding