



Briefing Note for DSLs:
CSA Centre's New
Whole School Approach to
Child Sexual Abuse
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Due to a recent number of Child Sexual Abuse cases, where schools have contacted me seeking advice I wanted to share this resource from the CSA with you. This is timely given the Royal Assent of the Crime and Poling Act and the mandatory reporting of Child Sexual Abuse. This resource is helpful for schools in auditing their own practices and therefore evidence-based practice as to your school's staff skill set and safeguarding arrangements, in supporting children who may be experiencing child sexual abuse.

Purpose of the New Resource

The CSA Centre has launched *Implementing a Whole School Approach to Child Sexual Abuse*, a free, step-by-step framework designed to help early years settings, schools and colleges strengthen and sustain their response to child sexual abuse. It translates statutory guidance (including *Keeping Children Safe in Education*) into practical, whole-setting actions.

Why This Matters for Schools

- An estimated **one in ten children** in England and Wales experience sexual abuse before age 16.
- Education staff are uniquely placed to notice concerns early due to daily contact and long-term relationships with pupils.
- When schools respond well, the impact on children's safety, disclosure and recovery is **transformative**.

What the Framework Provides

A. Whole School Audit and Improvement Tools

The resource guides DSLs and leaders through a structured audit of current practice, supported by prompts, templates and improvement planning tools. It helps identify strengths and gaps across:

- Policies and procedures
- Recording and information-sharing
- Staff confidence and training
- Culture, leadership and governance
- Responses to online and technology-assisted harmful sexual behaviour

B. Practical, Evidence-Based Guidance

The framework supports staff to:

- Recognise concerns
- Communicate effectively with children
- Respond consistently and confidently
- Understand emerging issues such as online-facilitated abuse and harmful sexual behaviour

C. Supplementary Advice Guides

Additional short guides provide targeted support on:

- Child-centred responses and safe language
- Capturing children's voices
- Supporting children from different cultural, ethnic or faith backgrounds
- Responding to harmful sexual behaviour (early years, primary, secondary)
- Responding to technology-assisted harmful sexual behaviour

These are designed to deepen staff knowledge where audits identify specific needs.

Key Messages for DSLs

- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:** the framework helps to strengthen this across the whole setting.
- **This resource does not replace statutory guidance:** it supports schools to implement it effectively.
- **DSL leadership is central:** DSLs are expected to lead the audit, coordinate improvement activity, and ensure staff are confident in responding to concerns.
- **Children rarely disclose directly:** staff must be equipped to notice subtle signs and respond sensitively.
- **Online and technology-assisted behaviours** require specific attention and consistent responses across the setting.

Recommended Actions for DSLs

1. **Review the Whole School Approach framework** and identify immediate priorities for your setting.
2. **Plan and lead a whole-school audit**, involving senior leaders, pastoral staff, governors and pupil voice.
3. **Map findings to your safeguarding improvement plan**, ensuring actions are time-bound and measurable.
4. **Use the supplementary advice guides** to strengthen staff confidence in identified areas.
5. **Ensure training and supervision** explicitly address child sexual abuse, including online elements and harmful sexual behaviour.
6. **Communicate clearly with all staff** that responding to sexual abuse is a whole-school responsibility.

[Whole school approach – a new resource for education settings | CSA Centre](#)