

Training for social workers involved in child protection investigation, assessment and decision-making in cases of child sexual abuse



How can we work with situations where there is alleged, suspected or known sexual abuse by an adult male or female, but there is no conviction or prosecution?

The protective carer says they will protect but can they? What do they need that will help them understand what has happened to their family and to enable them to move on safely?

What is sexual exploitation – does it differ from child sexual abuse?

Do we use the same approach with adult women who perpetrate sex offences as we do with adult male sex offenders?

These are just a few of the questions social workers are required to unravel in their day-to-day work and which the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, experts in the field of child sexual abuse, can help with.

It is essential they have the opportunity to debate and discuss these, and many more questions, in order to explore the complexity of child sexual abuse.

Our high quality training is delivered by experienced and knowledgeable practitioners, it is grounded in up-to-date research and it is presented in a way that will make it immediately usable for social workers. They will be able to apply the models and frameworks to assist them to make sense of the situation they are dealing with, and help them to make the right decision for the child victim and other family members.

Courses offered by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation that will enhance social work practice and develop skills, confidence and knowledge in this area of work are described below:



A one-day course for understanding child sexual abusers

The training course provides a broad and informative overview of child sexual abuse by an adult male offender, it explores different ways of understanding sexual offending and how these can be applied to the investigation and post investigation decisions social workers are required to make in their work with victims, offenders and families. Based on research, experience and current practice the course covers:

- Models to understand behaviour
- The process of sexually abusive behaviour in a variety of contexts
- The impact of child sexual abuse
- What we mean by risk and risk management
- What is included in defensible decision making

A one-day course; women who sexually abuse children

This training course will provide social workers with a broad and informative overview of child sexual abuse by an adult female offender, it will help them understand the wider implications of female sexual abuse and increase their confidence and knowledge when approaching these situations. Based on our experience, research and current practice the course covers:

- The challenges female abusers present to commonly held views about women's behaviour and how this can influence 'hearing' the victim's disclosure
- The prevalence of female sexual abuse of children
- Impact issues for victims and protective carers
- Common abuse patterns
- Skills to assist in engaging the women during the course of investigation, post investigation and assessment
- The differences between adult male and female offenders and the need to develop gender-responsive assessment, interventions and management strategies specific to women

Both of these courses can be offered at a foundation and a more advanced level

A three-day course; how did they do that to us?

This course is designed to use knowledge of adult male and/or female sex offenders to understand the experience of the non-offending carer and child victim. Offenders often minimise the extent of the abuse, therefore knowledge of offending patterns can help understand the presentation of the child victim and other family members. This is relevant to work with families whether the offender is still present, or has left but problems still persist. Based on our experience, research and current practice the course covers:

- Understanding different patterns and profiles of adult sex offenders
- Combined with understanding the protective carers situation in relation to their experience of the offender
- To provide the format for an integrated risk assessment.

A one-day course; child sexual abuse and the Internet

The considerable increase to the number of individuals being investigated, cautioned or convicted for internet offences poses particular challenges for social workers in assessing the risks posed to children in the family home and assessment of their future safety. This training explores how the Internet is used as part of sexually abusive behaviour; it looks at what motivates different types of internet offender and some practical ways in which associated risks can be assessed. The course will enable social workers to better understand:

- The different types of internet abuser, their characteristics and motivations
- The apparent similarities and differences between internet-only and contact offenders
- Understanding and managing specific risks

A one-day course; child sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation is a curious term, for it runs the risk of glossing over the reality of what is done to children. The reality is that each year thousands of children in the UK are raped and abused from as young as 11-years by people seeking to humiliate, violate and control them. The impact on their lives is often devastating.⁽¹⁾

This training will help social workers to develop their knowledge and understanding about child sexual exploitation. It will draw on the most recent research, practice and court experience to help them to develop a greater understanding and knowledge about the process of sexual exploitation. The course will:

- Provide a definition of sexual exploitation of children and young people
- Explore the complexity of consent
- Identify opportunities for intervention by understanding the behaviour of the offender and the impact issues for the young person
- Identify methods to assist with prosecution.

(1) The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation In Gangs and Groups November 2012

Impact issues for children and young people who have experienced child sexual abuse - one and two-day courses

For many children who have experienced sexual abuse there will be a sense of betrayal and stigmatization as a result of threats, secrecy and self-justifying attitudes of the abuser.

They may feel guilt and have a low opinion of themselves, which could lead them into a range of difficult behaviours and subsequent problematic relationships and parenting. The full extent of harm and the impact on their health and development may not initially be known.

This training aims to assist workers understand how we can help children and young people develop coping strategies and resilience by providing the right level of support from protective carers and others involved in the child's life.

It is crucial to have as much information as possible to help establish the nature of the harm and the protective factors experienced by the young person and their family in order to ensure the right help is offered at the right time.

Children and young people who display sexually harmful behaviour - This training can be offered over different lengths of time, and at different levels

We understand that the sexual behaviour of children and young people of all ages can be seen on a continuum from age-expected, mutually agreed sexual behaviours to serious crimes.

Many engage in activities through curiosity that forms a normal part of sexual development, whilst others engage in behaviour that is clearly harmful and abusive.

Whilst recognising the seriousness of the impact of their behaviour, our approach to this work recognises their status as children or young people and the need to work with them in a way that is different from adults and recognises their developmental stages.

We offer a range of training concerned with assessment and on-going interventions for children of all ages, which includes the key issues relating to identification, assessment, risk management and future care.

We have these and many more courses which can be tailored to meet the needs and experience of the participant group, and will draw up on expert knowledge, research, and case examples.

In addition to a comprehensive training programme, we provide an extensive range of assessment services, we work directly with sex offenders and their families, and we offer specialist case advice for professionals. We also have specialist staff who work with children and young people who are victims of child sexual abuse, and we also work with children and young people who commit sexually harmful behaviours.

To discuss your training requirements contact
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