

Developing Your Strategy



Working to protect children



Do we need a strategy to prevent child sexual abuse?

Child sexual abuse is harmful. But projects that work on child sexual abuse (we call them “interventions”) are usually small and scattered. Resources are spent on responding to abuse after it has happened, when the harm has already been done. If you want to prevent it happening in the first place you need a prevention strategy. You need this to be in the minds of many people, in many situations.

Sexual abuse takes many different forms and has many different causes. These causes are inter-related so your prevention strategy needs to make sense to different groups of people. It needs to be multi-layered. It needs to be well thought-out. We call this a systematic prevention strategy.

Your strategy will help you –

- Make the best use of your resources
- Get agreement from different groups of people
- Decide on the best solutions for your situation
- Focus people’s efforts
- Win the commitment of professionals and non-professionals
- Plan for your different target audiences
- Design a strategy that is more likely to be put into practice

We offer this document as a suggested structure that you can use while you are developing your strategy. If you think it is helpful, please use it as a guide. It is not a set of instructions. You know your situation, so please change this guide as you wish, to fit your own situation.

Overview of our step by step approach

STEP 1. Begin

STEP 2. Describe the child sexual abuse problems your children are facing

STEP 3. Understand the context in which you are working

STEP 4. Find example interventions

STEP 5. Create an action plan to put your strategy into practice

STEP 6. Monitor, evaluate and share learning

Please download the document “A working tool” to help you prepare and record your strategy.

Step 1: Begin

- Identify 5 or 6 key partners. Who is already working in this field? Bring people together.
- Agree how to work together. Name and discuss differences of power/status as well as practical matters. Agree what words you will use to talk about child sexual abuse.
- Agree your goals. Develop a shared vision of how child sexual abuse can be prevented. It can help to have a shared understanding of child sexual abuse and a shared idea of what change will look like.
- Identify key stakeholders. These are people who can enable or block progress. Decide how to involve them. Think about how to involve young people, parents, and survivors of abuse. Are there any influential community or religious leaders who need to be involved?
- Discuss the skills, capacity and confidence of partners to achieve change. Support partners to develop their skills, capacity and confidence.

Step 2: Describe the child sexual abuse problems your children are facing

- What do you know about the child sexual abuse problems in your area? You will need to talk to professionals, community members, young people, women, and children. You can also draw on published research on the internet.
- Describe the size and nature of each problem. Which groups of children/young people are most vulnerable/at risk? From whom? In what settings? Don't worry if you don't have all the information you need at this stage.
- What do you understand to be the main causes, risks and safety factors for these sexual abuse problems? Think of factors that are about individuals, relationships, communities, different places, and society.
- Prioritise the problems you want to change. You may choose to prioritise by the size of the problem or by seriousness of harm.
- How are the problems changing over time? Find ways of understanding and recording this (eg through data collection).

Step 3: Understand the context in which you are working

- What is already in place to prevent child sexual abuse? What plans, legislation and policies already exist? What primary, secondary, and tertiary services and interventions are available? What is the state of professional skills, knowledge, training and collaboration? What is the level of community awareness and commitment to change CSA? Who are the most vulnerable groups of people and how well are they protected?
- List the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to any strategy that tries to prevent CSA in your context.
- What are the three most important strengths in your context? What are the three most important weaknesses?

Step 4: Find example interventions

- Download the Smallbone prevention framework on the ECSA web site. Map existing interventions onto the framework.
- Do a local needs assessment. Find the gaps in interventions for different problems, audiences and levels. For example, are interventions focussed mainly after abuse has happened? Are there any interventions for potential offenders (ie people at risk of abusing a child)?
- Use the search tool on the ECSA web site to find interventions that might be relevant for your local needs. Add these to the Smallbone diagram. How well do they fill the gaps?
- Agree your priorities. These will need to take account of your local resources. Are there any interventions happening already that should either stop or be strengthened? Should new interventions be introduced? Can these be adapted to meet local needs?
- In the light of the interventions you have picked, are there any key gaps that need to be filled? Eg in your skills, resources, community awareness, policies, processes, collaboration.

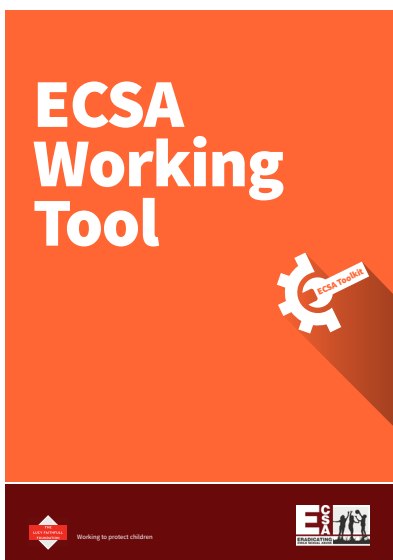
Step 5: Create an action plan to put your strategy into practice

- Agree a process and timetable to implement your strategy
- Define the roles and responsibilities of partners, stakeholders, organisations, individuals. Make sure there is agreement to these. Record the details of this agreement.
- Identify the resources needed for delivery.
- Develop key skills through training.
- Engage communities.
- Build support and communication networks between different organisations and individuals. Plan how to work with the media.

Step 6: Monitor, evaluate and share learning

- Agree a process, responsibilities and a timetable for monitoring the progress of the action plan.
- Evaluate the individual interventions as well as the overall strategy.
- Timetable regular reviews by key partners to share learning and revise the strategy.
- Use ceremonies and celebrations to share success and learning. These help to maintain motivation and commitment.

ECSA Toolkit Publications



All of these publications are available to download via the ECSA website:
<http://ecsa.lucyfaithfull.org>



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