

Assessing the Risk: Protecting the Child UK



Type of intervention



Book/Guide

Target groups, levels of prevention and sub-groups:

(Potential)
Offenders

Secondary prevention

Adult (21 Years +) | Male | Book/Guide | English

(Potential)
Offenders

Tertiary prevention

Adult (21 Years +) | Male | Book/Guide | English

Target population

Adult males who pose a risk of committing a sexual offence against a child (both known and alleged or suspected sex offenders who are not in the criminal justice system). This includes men:

- with historic convictions which pre-date the Sex Offences Act 1997 or those no longer subject to sex offender registration requirements
- who have never been convicted of sexual offences against a child but whom there are concerns about by the Family Court

In addition, their partners and/or primary carers and children with whom they may be seeking children.

Delivery organisation

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), a UK based charity specialising in child protection. The assessment guide was developed in partnership with the Sexual Behaviour Unit, Newcastle. The intervention guide was developed by NSPCC.

Mode and context of delivery

An evidence-informed good practice guide to the assessment and treatment of known and alleged/suspected sex offenders who are not in the criminal justice system. For use by social workers to improve their ability to assess the risk of sexual harm to children living with or in contact with the men described above. Usually for children who are subject to a child protection plan or in exceptional circumstances, children in need. A report is produced assessing the man's risk and the partner's capacity to keep the children safe. This is informed by the voice of the child/ren.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Professionally qualified and experienced social care staff.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Length of assessment varies and includes regular assessment sessions with the man, his partner or other primary carer and sessions with child/children with whom the alleged sex offender is in contact with, to seek their views and enable their voices to be heard. This is expected to take four to five months. The intervention or treatment phase is focused on the individual's needs and is tailor made and delivered individually. The family are involved in the life-long safety planning.

Description of intervention

The great majority of adults who pose a risk to children are not in the criminal justice system. They are often not assessed or subject to any treatment and may be living with or in contact with children. In order to protect children from adults who may pose a sexual risk to children, social services departments and courts have to make difficult decisions about who children can and cannot live with and have with whom they can have contact. A Good Practice Guide to Assessment has been developed by the NSPCC with Newcastle's Sexual Behaviour Unit, for use by social workers. A further guide for intervention following this assessment has been developed by the NSPCC. It draws on what is known about key risk factors and about what constitutes good practice in assessment and treatment. Building on the work of Hanson et. al. (1998) and Beech et. al. (2009), it has a strong child protection focus which distinguishes it from more adult- focused texts. It includes an assessment of the child's needs and the needs of the protective/non-abusing carer, as well as an assessment of the known or alleged offender. It draws on cognitive behavioural theory, attachment theory and the Good Lives approach.

Evaluation

Assessing the Risk: Protecting the Child is currently being evaluated. Early results can be shared.

References

Beckett, R., Beech, A., Fisher, D. and Fordham, A. (1994) Community – based Treatment for Sex Offenders: An evaluation of seven treatment programmes. London: Home Office.

Smallbone, S., Marshall, W., and Wortley, R. (2008) Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Evidence, policy and practice. Willan: Devon.

Durham, A. (2008) A guide to an initial assessment of an adult who has committed sexual abuse. Available online at <http://www.ccinform.co.uk/Articles/2008/01/29/1884/Guide+to+an+initial+assessment+of+an+adult+who+has+committed+sexual.html>

Contact details

NSPCC

Telephone: 07768 146567

Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Helpline for children and young people aged 18 years and under: 0800 1111