

Spending review submission September 2024

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IICSA Changemakers
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IICSA Changemakers

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Taking action. Creating change.
Preventing child sexual abuse.

1 Introduction and Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

The Changemakers group has come together as an informal coalition. They are a range of individuals, charities and survivor organisations that support those who have been subjected to child sexual abuse and those that work on the frontline and have experience of preventing and tackling child sexual abuse.

IICSA Changemakers are all committed to inspiring a national mission to prevent child sexual abuse and ensuring support is provided to victims and survivors.

1.2 Executive Summary

The 2024 spending review is an opportunity for the Government to ensure that the essential join up and connections across Government departments for the prevention of and improved response to child sexual abuse are not only achieved but cemented by having appropriate resource accordingly aligned.

We have already seen the harm that can come from not achieving this connection such as the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund which is currently due to close in March 2025 with no known plan in place for its replacement. This closure has meant Police and Crime Commissioners cannot re-procure vital services which in turn has seen the exit of specialist providers because they cannot retain staff beyond the end of the year due to the lack of confirmed funding.

The Victims Funding strategy set out to ensure ‘the right support is available to all victims, at the right time’¹ and highlights the wealth of evidence on the importance and effectiveness of specific support

¹ Ministry of Justice, [Victims Funding Strategy](#), 2022

services. Despite this, children still experience a huge lack of bespoke support, which in the area of child sexual abuse is critical to recovery. The IICSA recommendation to deliver therapeutic support after experiencing child sexual abuse holds all the evidence and direction needed to deliver this essential service and align the Victims Funding Strategy with better resource through the spending review and remains a clear and unanswered call.

2 Spending Review

2.1 The cost

Research shows that child sexual abuse can impact on wider society, through the increased uptake or usage of public services both by victim, survivors and by perpetrators. These public services include the criminal justice system, healthcare system, social services, welfare benefits system and special educational provision.²

A study by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) calculated that child sexual abuse costs the UK around £3 billion a year (2012/13 prices).³ Of this total estimated cost, by far the greatest part – around £2.7 billion – was linked to lost labour market productivity due to higher unemployment and lower incomes among victims and survivors. The remainder of this total – around £424 million – was primarily made up of costs to the public purse resulting from the provision of health, criminal justice and child social services.

² One in Four (2015), op. cit.; Sneddon et al. (2016), op. cit.; Maniglio (2009), op. cit.; Price-Robertson (2012), op. cit.; McGrath, S. A., Nilsen, A. A., and Kerley, K. R. (2011) Sexual victimization in childhood and the propensity for juvenile delinquency and adult criminal behavior: A systematic review. *Aggression & Violent Behavior*, 16(6), pp. 485-492; Ogloff et al. (2012), op. cit.; Kamiya et al. (2016), op. cit.; Cyr et al. (2016), op. cit.; Fergusson et al. (2013), op. cit.; Pereira et al. (2017), op. cit.; Nelson (2009), op. cit.; Saied-Tessier, A. (2014) Estimating the costs of child sexual abuse in the UK. NSPCC; Biehal et al. (2014) op. cit. ⁴

³ Saied-Tessier (2014), op. cit.

The NSPCC also attempted to monetise the human and emotional costs of CSA to victims and survivors. They estimated that the human and emotional costs experienced by victims and survivors in the UK amounts to around £38 billion annually. This was over a decade ago and the estimated figure today would be substantially more. (2012/13 prices).

Although it is debatable whether any methodology can meaningfully put a price on human pain and suffering, this figure is shared for emphasising how substantial the impacts of child sexual abuse are at both a personal and a societal level.⁴

Barnardo's and Pro Bono Economics evidence found that, for every £1 invested in specific support services for child sexual exploitation, it can save the taxpayer over £12. These savings are shared by multiple agencies and Governmental departments⁵.

2.2 Therapeutic support

The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse found that just 468 services supporting children and adults affected by sexual abuse exist across England and Wales⁶. Of these, four-fifths were in the not-for-profit sector, and in each region the Centre estimated that there were between 10,000-20,000 victims/survivors in need for every service. Almost half of the services identified were only able to support fewer than 100 people a year.

⁴ IICSA Final Report October 2022

⁵ Pro Bono Economics and Barnardo's (2011), An assessment of the potential savings from Barnardo's interventions for young people who have been sexually exploited

⁶ Parkinson, D. and Steele, M. (2024) Support Matters: The Landscape of Child Sexual Abuse Support Services in England and Wales. Barkingside: Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse.

In 2021, the Home Office estimated that the costs to society relating to children whose sexual abuse began or continued in the year ending March 2019 exceeded £10 billion⁷. In 2022, the economic and social costs of domestic abuse in England were estimated to be just under £78 billion⁸. Home Office research found most of the cost can be attributed to two areas: lost output and physical and emotional harm on the part of victims and survivors, and the cost on Government, with the cost of the police response, trials and prisons making up the largest expense. There are also considerable costs to the voluntary sector in the form of victim services, child sexual abuse related training and educational prevention⁹.

The Victim and Prisoner's Act 2024 is an opportunity to utilize the duty to collaborate for ICBs, OPCCs and LAs to come together to efficiently and effectively deliver appropriate support to all those who have experienced child sexual abuse. With this legislative framework available the funding should be reviewed in line with this cross-departmental approach.

2.3 Linked departments

In other areas it will be important that prevention of child sexual abuse is resourced through the Department for Education, that Health services are reflective of the volume of child sexual abuse that is first discovered in a healthcare setting and that prevalence of abuse can be better understood with an improved data set.

There is strong global evidence that education programmes are one of the most effective ways of preventing child abuse¹⁰. This focus on prevention

⁷ Home Office (2019) [A report on the economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse in England and Wales for victims who experienced abuse in the year to 31st March 2019](#),

⁸ Sarah Davidge (2022) [Investing to save: The economic case for funding specialist domestic abuse support](#), Women's Aid

⁹ Home Office (2019) [A report on the economic and social cost of contact child sexual abuse in England and Wales for victims who experienced abuse in the year to 31st March 2019](#),

¹⁰ [1] Lisa Van Leet et al. (2023) [Effectiveness of relationships and sex education: A systematic review of terminology, content, pedagogy, and outcomes](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1747938X23000209) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1747938X23000209>

does take resource but is a longer term investment that creates real and meaningful change for the national emergency we currently face this strategy is paramount.

Conclusion

The Victim and Prisoner's Act placed a duty on the Secretary of State to ensure provision is in place for children's particular needs through the victim code as well as ensuring appropriate services for all victims are in place. This duty will be significantly put at risk if it is not matched with resource that is aligned from carefully looking at the currently available funds and ensuring appropriate usage and connection. A Victim's Funding Strategy can be aligned against this duty but without the resourcing to a well thought through funding model the risk of not supporting current and future victims and survivors remains significantly impactful to the detriment of the economy and with an increased level of certainty.

The direction of the IICSA report was clear, the need for support is real and ever growing, it is urgent, and it will only add strain to the economy further if it is not answered in full, now.
