

Public Consultation on a Mandatory Reporting Regime for Child Sexual Abuse

27 June 2023

The vast majority who shared their experiences at the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (“IICSA”) - 88.6% - said they would like to see the introduction of mandatory reporting for child sexual abuse.

The government has said it accepts the need for that reporting and that it will be informed by a public consultation, initially in England. Surprisingly for a consultation which is focused on those working with children and young people, it was launched in late May, during exam season and closes during the summer holidays on 14 August 2023.

Whilst all organisations are invited to give their views on how a legal duty to report child sexual abuse would affect their stakeholders, the consultation is particularly aimed at those working with children and young people in regulated activity or positions of trust. That includes a charity, voluntary and community sectors and those more generally working with children. Importantly for health and social care providers it specifically directs the consultation at those supporting those affected by child sexual abuse.

There does seem to be a recognition that the introduction of mandatory reporting could have a major impact on stakeholders and there are some questions which suggest adults may need to be equipped to make subtle and nuanced decisions quite quickly if the duty is implemented widely. The questions the government would like feedback on include:

- Whether the duty to report should still focus on child sexual abuse or be extended to cover other forms of abuse and neglect.
- Whether accountability should be on individuals or at organisational level.
- What the potential impact on children and young people might be.
- Any equalities considerations, particularly from those sectors and workforces that may not have engaged directly with IICSA.
- How this duty might interact with existing duties and requirements.
- What additional support individuals and organisations that might be subject to the duty would need.
- When the duty might be disapplied.
- What sanctions would be appropriate.

If you would like any support or have any questions arising from the consultation please do not hesitate to let our team know.

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