



Saving Futures: Cross Party Group on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Minutes of meeting

Meeting Title: Safety First, Voices Heard: Best Practice for Children & Young People and Survivor Advisory Roles on CSA

Date: Thursday 11 December 2025

Time: 12:00–13:00

Location: Microsoft Teams (Virtual)

Sponsored by: Buffy Williams MS

Attendance:

Secretariat / CPG Support

- Buffy Williams MS (BW) – Member of the Senedd for the Rhondda; Meeting Sponsor
- Dr Ruth Mullineux-Morgan (RM) – Senior Policy & Public Affairs Officer (Wales), NSPCC Cymru
- Ryan Evans (RG) – Member Support Staff, Office of Buffy Williams MS

Speakers / Panellists

- Zarah Newman (ZN) – Safeguarding Advisor and Policy Manager, Welsh Government
- Cecile Gwilym (CGw) – Policy & Public Affairs Manager, NSPCC Cymru
- Karen Garland (KG) – Head of Policy, Marie Collins Foundation
- Jamie (J – MCF) – Member, Marie Collins Foundation Lived Experience Expert Group
- Andrea Varrella (AV) – Projects Lead, ECPAT International
- Dr Gemma Halliwell (GH) – Chief Executive, The Green House Bristol; Director, The Bluestar Project; Research Fellow
- Candice Harris (CH) – Lived Experience Consultant; Author; National Lived Experience Lead, Bluestar Project
- Dr Bethan Taylor (BT) – Senior Research Fellow, University of Bedfordshire
- Camille Warrington (CW) – Associate Professor, University of Bedfordshire

External Contributors / Audience

- Jan Pickles OBE (JP) – Chair, CSA Centre Advisory Board
- Sharron Wareham (SW) – Practice Improvement advisor, Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse
- Sioned Williams MS, Member of the Senedd for South Wales West
- Niamh Salkeld



Katy Jackson
 Helen Gordon
 Sarah Thomas
 Nicola Fitzpatrick
 Sian Bibey
 Sian Iolen Pritchard
 Angela Keller
 Helen Scaife
 Shannon Morris
 Nicola Cowan
 Rhian Morrille
 Lisa Witherden
 Sarah Cooper
 Hayley Fry
 Kirsty Hudson
 Catrin Simpson

Apologies

None recorded.

2. Agenda

Item	Time	Agenda Item	Speaker(s)
1	12:00– 12:05	Welcome & Introduction	Buffy Williams MS
2	12:05– 12:15	Welsh Government’s 10-Year CSA Strategy: Participation Vision	Zarah Newman
3	12:15– 12:50	Expert Panel Discussion	Chaired by Cecile Gwilym (NSPCC)
4	12:50– 13:00	Audience Q&A & Closing Remarks	Panel / Chair / Buffy Williams MS

3. Meeting Minutes

1. Meeting Opened: Buffy Williams MS, Chair of the Cross-Party Group opened the meeting, welcomed attendees, and confirmed the session would be recorded for minute taking and deleted afterwards. **BW** reminded participants of Senedd rules regarding AI assistants and, given the sensitive content (CSA, trauma, mental health), encouraged attendees to step away or turn off cameras if needed.

2. Agenda Item 1: Welcome & Introductions (BW)

- **BW** situated the meeting within the Welsh Government’s **10 Year CSA Strategy (2025–2035)**, emphasising the **centrality of meaningful participation** by children, young people, and survivors.

- **BW** referenced the **Lundy Model** (Space, Voice, Audience, Influence) as the rights-based framework for **safe, supported, and impactful** participation, highlighting the need for structured roles, safeguarding, and emotional support.
- **BW** introduced the agenda and speakers.

3. Agenda Item 2: Welsh Government Strategy Update (ZN)

ZN provided an overview of strategic development work:

- **Development process:** Over two years, Welsh Government ran cross sector workshops with NSPCC, the CSA Centre, Lucy Faithfull Foundation, and Barnardo's, and **included adult victim survivors** in national planning for the first time.
- **Vision:** Children living **free from sexual harm across their lifespan**, with **lifelong support** available for those who disclose later.
- **Strategic Objectives:**
 1. **Prevent** CSA through awareness, education, and culture change.
 2. **Protect** via **trauma-informed, multiagency responses**.
 3. **Support** children and families (including parents/caregivers).
 4. **Support adult survivors**, noting **non-specialist services** (e.g., housing) often receive disclosures.
- **Rapid Review (global, 5-year window):**
 - **Limited authentic child voice** across research.
 - Common barriers to disclosure: **not being believed**, adults **avoiding/mishandling conversations, variable responses**.
 - Gaps in **prevention evidence** (how young people avoid harm).
 - Young people request better **RSE materials, adults prepared** to have open conversations, and **more relevant digital safety guidance**.
- **Participation Approach:** Intention to establish a **Children & Young People's Advisory Group** likely **open to all**, with strong safeguarding; complemented by wider engagement via **youth forums, schools, and targeted groups**.
- **Timeline:** **Consultation summary** to be published **before Christmas 2025**; **final Strategy** and **first 3-year Delivery Plan** expected **Feb–Mar 2026**.

4. Agenda Item 3: Panel Discussion (CGw, Chair)

4.1 Opening Remarks (CGw)

CGw emphasised that **participation must shape decisions**, not sit as an add-on. She noted that the **NSPCC Young People Board for Change** helped shape the panel questions.

4.2 Speaker Introductions

- **CH** described current roles as lived experience consultant, facilitator of parent programmes, and author.
- **GH** outlined leadership of The Green House, directorship at the Bluestar Project (pre-trial therapy), and work as a survivor/researcher; co-host of the *Conversations We've Never Had* podcast.
- **KG** summarised MCF's focus on **technology assisted CSA** and introduced **J (MCF)**.
- **J (MCF)** noted a decade of lived experience contribution to MCF's work.
- **AV** described ECPAT's international network and practice in child participation and survivor informed research.

- **CW** and **BT** introduced the **Safer Young Lives Research Centre** and the **Young Researchers Advisory Panel** at the University of Bedfordshire.

4.3 Panel Question 1: Building Safe and Inclusive Participation - How do we build safe and inclusive networks?

Verbal contributions were supplemented by live chat submissions:

- **CW** advised planning to **maximise safety/minimise risk** (rather than promising “no risk”), with **pre/during/post support**, trauma-informed practice, and **relationship-based** approaches; urged continuous attention to **missing voices** and **targeted resourcing**.
- **KG** stressed **rights-based ethics** and **safeguarding**, recommending **partnership with existing expert groups** to avoid duplication; noted MCF’s forthcoming **framework** for lived experience groups following independent evaluation.
- **AV** highlighted **multiple, culturally sensitive participation routes**, including **anonymous options**, given varying perceptions of safety.
- **CH** emphasised **peer connection** among young people to build confidence and voice, and the value of **lived experience facilitators** who can hold difficult content with hope.
- **GH** underlined **human connection and kindness** as a starting point and cautioned against **over professionalising** interactions in ways that reduce accessibility.
- **SW** (chat) welcomed progress on the Strategy and encouraged a **shift away from placing responsibility on children to disclose**, towards **professional responsibility to notice, ask, and respond** to signs and indicators of CSA; suggested exploring **professional barriers**.
- **AV** (chat) added that across ECPAT’s research a **major barrier** cited by professionals is **discomfort initiating conversations** about sexual abuse, linked to **internal bias and stigma** around sex and sexual abuse.
- **Unattributed (chat)** noted the risk that language implying “work without risk” can **mislead young people**; the aim should be to **manage risk ethically** rather than imply its absence.
- **BT (chat)** suggested learning from **Safe Lives Changemakers YP Group**, which has involved young people **with and without lived experience**, offering a potential design reference.
- **J (MCF) (chat)** emphasised that **adult lived experience (LEG) presence** can help **instil trust** for survivors who have had **difficult experiences with services**, making engagement more likely.

4.4 Panel Question 2: Preparation and Support - How do we prepare and support people?

- **J (MCF)** framed CSA as a **public health issue** requiring **clear, sustained investment** and consistent messaging.
- **GH** encouraged a **de-clinicalised stance** for non-specialists: specialists should **support**, not **gatekeep**, everyday caring responses so **all adults** can listen and respond safely.
- **BT** focussed on **sustainability for facilitators**: embed participation within teams; provide **proactive clinical/reflective supervision**; align organisational processes to **trauma-informed participation**; and work with **flexible funders** who accept **participant shaped outcomes**.

Additional chat contributions recorded:

- **SW (chat)** reflected that **children, young people, and families** should help define not only “what works” but “**what matters,**” including voices of **those who have been harmed** and **those who have caused harm**. Many feel able to contribute **only as support concludes**, yet **funding constraints** can prevent services from facilitating safe, equitable participation at that point.

4.5 Panel Question 3: How do we turn engagement into real change? (discussion of this question was time limited)

- **CW** emphasised **designing influence pathways from the outset** and maintaining **transparent feedback loops** so contributors can see how their input affects decisions.
- **KG (chat)** highlighted the need to **avoid over-extracting survivor narratives**, striking a careful balance between enabling survivors to transform experience into action and **avoiding harm or exploitation**.
- **BT (chat)** proposed that **compensation** (financial and beyond) should be considered when inviting survivors to contribute time, expertise, and emotional labour; a colleague’s **compensation model resource** was noted as available to share.

5. Audience Q&A and General Chat Notes

- **JP** highlighted that **independent advocacy** is **essential** for safe survivor participation and called for attention to **stabilising advocacy funding** in Wales to underpin participation.
- **RM (chat)** invited attendees to **add thoughts in the chat**, confirming these would be captured in a **paper/briefing**.
- **ZN (chat)** welcomed **follow-up discussions** and noted meetings would be set up in the **New Year**; provided contact details.

6. Closing Remarks (BW)

- **BW** thanked speakers and attendees, reiterating that **participation is central**, not an add-on, to shaping a safer and more compassionate system.
- **BW** confirmed that a **post meeting briefing** would be produced to share key messages with the **Cabinet Secretary** as Strategy work progresses.
- **BW** closed the meeting at **13:00**.

Decisions

- No formal decisions recorded.

Summary of Actions

Action No.	Action	Owner (Initials)	By When
1	Produce a briefing summarising meeting themes for the Cabinet Secretary	RM / CGw	Early 2026
2	Continue cross sector dialogue on participation structures for the CSA Strategy	ZN & partners (NSPCC, MCF, UoB, ECPAT)	Ongoing
3	Publish consultation summary on CSA Strategy Consultation	ZN	Before Christmas 2025

4	Publish final Strategy & first 3-year Delivery Plan	ZN	Feb–Mar 2026
5	Share MCF lived experience group framework when available	KG / J (MCF)	When published