



Department of Health

Your Ref: CSE/Recs

PO-1053258

From Nicola Blackwood MP
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Councillor Paul Watling
Cabinet Members' Office
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Dear Mr Watling

Thank you for your letter of 30 September to Jeremy Hunt, co-signed by Councillor Kevin Guy and Andrew Mason, about support for victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation (CSE).

No child should ever be abused or neglected and this Government is committed to preventing these terrible crimes from happening and making sure that every child gets the support they need.

We know that most child sex abuse (CSA) and exploitation is unreported. As a result, there is limited local and regional data on the prevalence or incidence of CSA and CSE. Needs are under-reported and services therefore tend to be under-commissioned. The Department of Health has commissioned NHS Digital to develop, collect and publish a CSA data standard in a way that will provide commissioners with a better understanding of the prevalence of CSA in England and inform local health needs assessment. The purpose of improved prevalence data is to lead to informed commissioning of needs and services for people who have been abused, and to improve health outcomes, through more timely support, thereby reducing the impact of the abuse and preventing disease and poor health later on in life.

We should not assume that all children need medicalised treatment in order to help them come to terms with the crimes committed against them. Not all children and young people who have been abused or exploited will develop a mental health problem and intervening unnecessarily or inappropriately can be harmful. For those that do need mental health support, the important thing is that they get the right care

at the right time, based on their clinical needs, not on their potential needs based on their experiences.

I hope this reply is helpful and trust you will share it with your co-signatories.

Best wish

Nicola

NICOLA BLACKWOOD