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# DEVELOPMENT OF A QUESTIONNAIRE AND SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE FOR A NATIONAL PREVALENCE SURVEY ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN THE UK

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# Overview of Surveys & Questionnaires

## 2 surveys:

- School survey for 11–16-year-olds
- Online survey for 16–25-year-olds

## 3 questionnaires:

	11-15	16-17	18-25
School	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Online		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



# Consultations on questionnaire and safeguarding

**28 Child, Adolescent, Young Adult Survivors**

5 x Participatory Sessions

**34 Children, Adolescents, Young Adults**

3 Rounds of Cognitive Interviews

**4 Child, Adolescent, Young Adult Survivors**

4 x Qualitative Interviews

**8 Adult Survivors**

1 x Focus Group

**53 Safeguarding Professionals**

2x Delphi & 4 x Focus Groups

**10 SEND/ASN Professionals**

1 x Roundtable & 6 Individual feedback

**6 Education Professionals**

Individual feedback

**5 Prevalence researchers**

(Recent prevalence studies in Sweden, Norway, Balkans, Australia, USA)

**9 x Abuse & Violence Support, Prevention & Research Organisations**

(E.g. Survivors Trust, We are Survivors, Survivors UK, Safer Young Lives, Barnardo's, Lucy Faithfull Foundation)

**Consultations with** Department for Education, Welsh Govt, Scottish Govt, Domestic Abuse Commissioner Office, National Crime Agency



# Violence Topics

## Measurement Categories

- Physical abuse\*
- Emotional abuse\*
- Neglect\*
- Exposure to domestic violence & abuse\*
- Sexual abuse (incl. exploitation)\*
- Criminal exploitation\*
- Intimate partner and dating violence
- Peer and sibling violence and bullying
- Harsh parenting / corporal punishment
- Neighbourhood & gang violence

## Abuse Characteristics

- Age at onset and cessation
- Frequency
- Settings and locations
- Perpetrators
- Disclosure



# Developing a Trauma-Informed Questionnaire

## Centring the voices of survivors

Extensive consultation has been completed with both child and adult survivors of childhood violence

## Using trauma-informed practice guidelines

- Question introductions prepare participants for each topic before engaging
- Response options include opt-out responses such as 'I don't remember' and 'I do not feel comfortable to say'
- Every questionnaire page has a 'pause' and an 'exit' option, if participants would like to take a break or stop the survey
- Topics have been ordered to begin with less confronting violence types



# Final Questionnaire

- 17 composite scales on violence experiences + associated follow-up questions
- 7 sections on demographics, risk factors, protective factors, and outcomes

## SDCS - School Survey

### Violence Items

Start of Block: Q1 - Witnessing Community Violence

\*(ALL)

WCV\_Intro

The next questions ask about things that are difficult and hurtful for children, so you may find some of our questions hard to answer.

Help is available to you if these questions make you sad, angry or upset. You can stop at any time by pressing the **pause my survey** or **view support options** buttons. No one will know the answers you give on any of these questions.

First, we ask about things that might happen in your local area.

By **local area**, we mean near where you live or go to school, like your neighbourhood or local parks. This is **NOT** about things that happen in your home or in your school.

\*(ALL)

WCV\_Scr

In your local area, have you **ever seen** the following things?

	yes (1)	no (0)	not sure or don't remember (98)	don't feel comfortable to say (99)
people fighting or hitting each other (A)				
violence by the police (B)				
someone being stabbed (C)				
someone being shot (D)				

End of Block: Witnessing Community Violence

Start of Block: Witnessing Community Violence Follow-Up

GO TO WCV\_12mo if WCV\_Scr "1" count>0

GO TO ECV\_Intro if WCV\_Scr "1" count=0

\*(WCV\_Scr "1" count>0)

WCSV\_12mo



# Adaptations by Age

## 11–15-year-old version

- Use of term ‘private parts’ in sexual abuse items (except for Rape questions)
- No reference to pressure or force in sexual abuse screening items – instead ask follow up ‘did you feel pressured or forced to do this, or was it unwanted?’
- Asked about last-year and lifetime prevalence

## 16–25-year-old versions

- Use of anatomical body parts in all sexual abuse items
- ‘When you did not want to’ in all sexual abuse items to capture only unwanted sexual experiences
- 16–17-year-olds are asked about last-year and lifetime prevalence; 18–25-year-olds are only asked about lifetime prevalence



## Level of Anonymity

### ONS original proposal...

#### **Partial anonymity, with flagging procedure:**

- Identifying information is collected
- A child is flagged for follow-up if they endorse certain items
- Safeguarding action is taken
- Followed-up with, regardless of whether they have opted in to receive support.

**However, our consultations provided significant evidence to move forward with total anonymity.**





## Reasons for Wanting Anonymity

### Accurate responses

“If I thought there was gonna be some come back or somehow it would be traced [back to me], then I would have lied” [Adult Survivor]

### Survivor Agency & Control

“it's taking control out of the child's life further ... as they may not feel safe or want to disclose” [CYP Survivor]

### Harms/ Consequences

“sometimes ‘help’ may make the situation worse, help is not always needed” [CYP Survivor]

### System Burden

“Then it's almost like [being] abused [again] by not being acted upon it, that could be retraumatising” [Adult Survivor]



## Recommendations on Anonymity

- **Fully anonymous methodology, with numerous opt-in support options**
  - No safeguarding action will be taken as a result of survey responses
  - No personal identifiable information is collected (unless opt-in support is requested)
  - Numerous support option available to all participants throughout the process
  - Safeguarding support is recommended to participants (via in-survey messages) based on survey responses
  - Disclosures of abuse or other concerns (e.g. suicidality) during follow-up, will result in safeguarding action/onward referral



## Support Recommendations

- **The ONS should partner with an abuse support organisation\* to facilitate the safeguarding procedure**
  - Work in partnership with the school
- Various types of support options, accessed in various ways, should be available (meeting survivor requirements)
- Easy to access
- Lots of signposting

\* Referred to as the “Support Organisation”



# Opt-in support for School survey (I)

## Drop-In Rooms

- Staffed by Support Organisation
- Available on the day before the survey, day of the survey, 2 days after survey (8am – 4pm)
- School Safeguarding Team will also be in their rooms ready to receive students

## In-Person

- Be seen in school before the end of the day
- By Support Organisation or School Safeguarding Team
- Fill in form to survey's Support Page to book

## Website

- Hosted by ONS, dedicated Safety During Childhood Survey.
- Access to chat function, call-back bookings, details of helpline, and other resources
- Available long term



## Opt-in support for School survey (II)

### Online Chat

- Staffed by Support Organisation
- Available 24/7, available from the first survey to 60 days after the last survey
- Accessible through survey's Support Page and the SDCS website.

### Call-Back

- Staffed by Support Organisation
- Book call-back from 7am-10pm, 7 days a week, from the first survey to 60 days after the last survey
- Accessible through the survey's Support Page and the SDCS website.

### Helpline

- Staffed by Support Organisation,
- Available 24/7, from the first survey to 60 days after the last survey
- Details on the survey's Support Page, on the SDCS website and all information materials

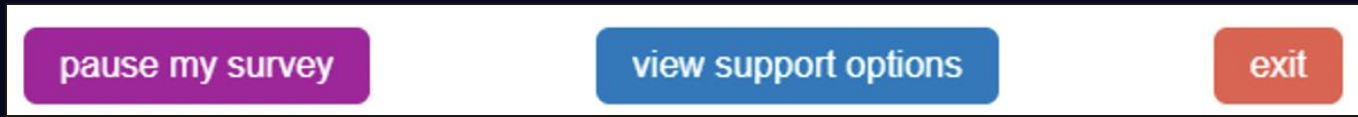
### Resources

- Request for support resources and helplines to be sent to phone or email
- Accessible through survey's Support Page and the SDCS website.



## Other Safeguarding Supports

- Information sessions for teachers, parents and students
- Teacher and parent support – website, helpline
- Debrief for students
- Support buttons on each survey page
- When participants endorse any abuse, suicidality/self-harm, and feeling unsafe at home/school/college/work they will receive a safeguarding message



Thank you for telling us about times adults have hurt you. You are not alone. We do not know who you are, but help is available.

To see how we can help you, click on **view support options**. There are several options to choose from. Some are anonymous and some are not. Your answers on this survey will not be shared, even if you ask for help.

Also, Childline is available all day, every day - Call: 0800 1111 or visit:  
<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>



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Thank you!

If you have any questions:

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