Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) Victim and Survivor Advisory Panel

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PACK

We have aimed to provide enough information to help you make an informed decision without making this pack overwhelming. We recognise that everyone's experiences, needs and boundaries are different, so please approach the information in whatever way feels most manageable for you.

Acknowledgements

Our team wishes to honour and share deep gratitude to all the survivors of child sexual abuse and exploitation that have contributed to the journey of this work. This Advisory Panel is the product of relentless advocacy and bravery from many survivors and victims, some of whom are no longer here with us today.

We acknowledge the vast wisdom that has led to this moment and our team approaches the task of building this Advisory Panel with the respect it truly deserves.

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A note on language

Throughout this document we have used the words 'victim' and 'survivor' interchangeably. We recognise that language can be rooted in a very personal preference, as well as ancestral significance, cultural values and our experiences of disclosure. If you choose to apply then we will check in with you about what your preferred terminology is, with the understanding that this may change and evolve.

Welcome

As Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, I strongly believe that people with lived experience should be at the heart of conversations about change. Victims and survivors bring a unique understanding of the realities and lifelong impact of child sexual abuse and exploitation. That knowledge is invaluable. The creation of this Advisory Panel reflects the importance of ensuring that your voices help shape the future of our safeguarding and criminal justice systems and contribute to better support for victims and survivors.

At the same time, I know that involvement is a personal choice. Taking part in lived experience work can be meaningful and rewarding, but it can also require emotional energy and reflection. Only you can decide whether now is the right time for you. If you are unsure, that is completely understandable. The information in this pack is here to help you make an informed decision. Whatever you decide, please know that your experiences matter and that your value is not determined by whether you apply to be on this Panel.

One of my strongest commitments is that people should be able to engage with this opportunity in a way that feels safe, supported and respectful. We welcome applications from people with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds, from communities across England and Wales, and from those whose voices are too often overlooked. There is no single "right" survivor story. You are not expected to have followed a particular path, and you do not need previous experience of advisory work, influencing policy or speaking publicly.

We know that everyone has different needs, responsibilities and circumstances. You may need information in a different format, support to complete your application, flexibility around interviews or meetings, help with communication or technology, or other adjustments to enable you to take part. Whatever your needs, we encourage you to tell us. We will listen, work with you to understand what would help, and make adjustments where possible so that you can participate safely, comfortably and with confidence.

Above all else, I want you to know that your wellbeing comes first. Whether you decide to apply, seek more information, or decide that this opportunity is not right for you, your decision will be respected. Thank you for taking the time to read this pack. I hope it gives you a clear picture of what the Advisory Panel is, what it hopes to achieve, and what being involved would ask of you. If you decide to apply, we look forward to hearing from you.





Claire Waxman OBE
Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales

Quick Guide

WHAT IS THE PANEL?

A group of up to 15 adult survivors of child sexual abuse and/or exploitation who will work with the Victims' Commissioners Office and Government departments to inform wider policy on child sexual abuse and exploitation.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Adult (aged 18 and over) survivors of child sexual abuse and/or exploitation.
- Be willing to participate in a politically impartial way, and collaboratively as part of an advisory structure alongside other survivors.

COMMITMENT

You need to be able to commit to at least 60 hours per year (running from April to April) which is roughly about 4 hours a week. Some months may be busier than others. Panel member will be invited to serve for 2 years.

SUPPORT AND PAYMENT

- Optional clinical supervision will be available for all Panel members if they wish to use it.
- Travel and accomodation expenses will be reimbursed.
- Payment for required meetings and specific project work will be offered.
- Participation can be flexible (with online and in person opportunities).
- Trauma informed meeting facilitation and safeguarding by specialist staff.

HOW TO APPLY

Step 1: Complete an application form which will then be reviewed by our recruitment team
Step 2: If shortlisted you will be invited to a 'getting to know you' chat (online or in person)
Step 3: Up to 15 successful applicants will then be appointed as Panel members based on their skills

You can contact **advisorypanel@victimscommissioner.org.uk** if you have any questions about this pack, the Panel or the expression of interest process

What is the Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Victim and Survivor Advisory Panel?

This Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) Victim and Survivor Advisory Panel is being established to put voices of adult victims and survivors at the heart of the government's response to CSAE. The Panel will provide a structured and supportive way for adult victims and survivors to share their expertise and insights, engage actively with government on relevant policy issues, and help shape better policy and practice.

In January 2025, the Home Office committed to establishing a Panel of victims and survivors to inform cross-government work and system reform related to CSAE. Following this commitment, the Home Office established an interim committee of adult survivors, facilitated by the NSPCC, to provide advice and insight on a range of policy issues. Learning from the interim model, including direct feedback from its members, together with wider engagement with victims, survivors, specialist organisations and sector experts, has informed the design of a longer-term Panel.

The Panel will be funded by the Home Office and hosted by the Office of the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales. This arrangement will provide the resources and support needed for the Panel to operate effectively, while maintaining its operational independence to make recommendations and strengthen accountability for relevant policy and practice. More information on the Office of the Victims' Commissioner can be found here: *Home - Victims Commissioner*

AT A GLANCE...

The Panel is the result of research, engagement and a desire for the voices of survivors to sit deeper and more authentically within government policy making.

What will the Panel look like?

The Panel will run for **two years,** from April 2027 to March 2029. Its core membership will comprise up to **15 adult victims and survivors of CSAE.** The Panel will be supported by a wider engagement network of established survivor forums, survivor-led organisations and specialist groups.

This wider network will help ensure the Panel's work is informed by a broader and more diverse range of survivor voices and experiences, recognising that a single Panel cannot represent the full diversity of victim and survivor experiences or speak on behalf of all victims and survivors.

Through this model, the Panel will support government departments and relevant partner organisations to engage meaningfully with victims and survivors. It will help ensure lived experience insight helps inform decision making, improves policy and practice, and supports better outcomes for victims and survivors.

AT A GLANCE...

- There will be up to 15 Panel members
- It will run for two years
- The Panel will be linked to a wider network of existing survivor groups and survivor-led organisations

What will the Panel work on?

Child sexual abuse and exploitation is an insidious and evolving harm, affecting victims and survivors in different ways and across different environments. The Panel will not attempt to cover every single issue at once. Instead, it will work with integrity and focus, agreeing a manageable number of priority areas each year, where survivor insight can add value and where there is a realistic opportunity to influence live policy, practice or accountability.

The Participation Manager will work with Panel members, Home Office and wider government to agree it's priorities and forward programme. This will draw on the expertise of Panel member and its wider network, live policy work across government, and proposals or requests from government departments and relevant partner organisations. Its programme will include a balance of proactive work and responsive work arising from emerging issues and opportunities across govnerment.

The Panel's role is to provide advice and lived experience insight to support better policy and practice, and improved outcomes for victims and survivors. Its involvement will not be presented as an endorsement unless the Panel has explicitly agreed to this.

The Panel is not a frontline support service, and will not provide emotional, financial, legal or psychological support to individual victims and survivors. It is also not a substitute for formal inquiries, investigations, casework advice, complaints processes or support services. Where individuals wish to engage with those routes, they will be signposted to the appropriate organisation.

Requests for the Panel's input will be managed through the Participation Manager, who will consider whether they align with the Panel's purpose and priorities before testing interest with members. Participation will be based on member interest and capacity, with consideration given to safety, accessibility and ensuring engagement is meaningful rather than tokenistic.

AT A GLANCE...

- The Panel is not a frontline service and will not do case work
- The Panel will work collaboratively with Government to choose areas and priorities to work on

Who governs the Panel?

The Panel will be run by the Victims' Commissioners Office and supported by dedicated staff with experience in safeguarding, participation and trauma-informed engagement. The Panel will have an agreed Terms of Reference, code of conduct, confidentiality arrangements and ways of working, which will be agreed with members once selected.

The Panel's forward programme of work will be shaped by input from Panel members, the Victims' Commissioner's Office and government departments. Panel members will bring their priorities and insights, government departments will help identify live policy issues and upcoming opportunities for engagement, and the Victims' Commissioner's Office will provide independent facilitation, support and oversight.

Proposals for engagement will be managed through the Participation Manager, who will consider whether they align with the Panel's purpose and priorities before testing interest with members.

Participation will be based on members' interest and capacity, with consideration given to relevance, potential impact, timing, safety, accessibility, impartiality and any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

Where the Panel provides advice or recommendations, members will be informed about how these have been considered and whether they have influenced policy, practice or future work.

AT A GLANCE...

- ·Two paid staff roles within the Victims' Commissioner's Office will be dedicated to facilitating the running of the Panel
- ·There will be a terms of reference and code of conduct that Panel members sign up to
- ·The Panel will work as a collective within broader procedures that support it's safety, integrity and ways of working

Guiding Principles

Trauma Informed	It will champion an approach that recognises the impact of trauma but treats people with curiosity, compassion and humanity.
Strengths and Rights	It will be grounded in human rights, with members' choice and agency at it's centre.
Integrity and Fairness	It will recognise that no individual or group can represent all victims. It will reflect on bias, inequality and ensure that a range of views are sought with honesty.
Dignity and Joy	It will intentionally make time and space for self expression, creativity, connection and joy.

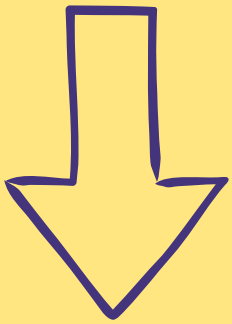
Expectations and support

Members should be able to commit to at **least 60 hours over a year**. The time commitment will vary across the months. Busier periods may require up to **four hours each week**, and the onboarding period may also involve more frequent sessions.

Most engagement sessions will last around **two hours, with some preparation**. Further optional engagement opportunities and training will be available throughout the year.

We recognise that members may have work, caring and other commitments, and will provide dates as far in advance as possible. We will also work with members to support flexibility and any adjustments they may need.

We encourage applications from individuals who feel able to attend meetings and workstream sessions wherever possible and remain actively involved throughout the year.



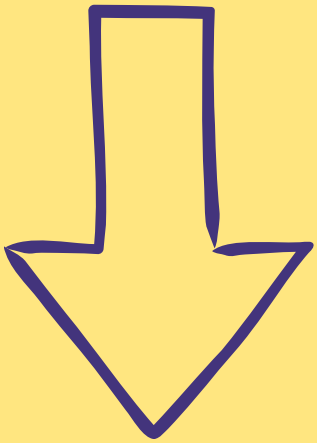
Most engagement will be online with some options for in person engagement.

The Participation Manager will chair the meetings in order to help provide safety, containment and direction in discussions as needed.

Reasonable travel and accommodation expenses will be reimbursed.

You will be offered payment for your attendance at required meetings and specific project work.

Your emotional wellbeing is the most important part in how we will work together.



Flexible participation will be encouraged and protected. You should not feel you have to mask, filter or hide parts of yourself, or the impact of child sexual abuse, in order to contribute.

You can p**ause, step back from an activity or leave** the Panel at anytime.

Participation will be based on **informed choice,** with clear information provided around confidentiality and safeguarding.

Optional clinical supervision (individual and group) will be regularly offered.

Ongoing **training and development** opportunities.

Accessibility support and adjustments.

T**rauma informed** faciliation of meetings and activities.

Ongoing routes for **honest feedback** and reflections.

Who can apply?

During the expression of interest process we will be looking at the following requirements. Applicants should:

- be aged 18 or over
- have lived experience of child sexual abuse and/or exploitation
- be able to communicate in English with reasonable adjustments or communication support where available
- currently live in England or Wales
- be willing to undergo due diligence checks and a DBS basic check
- be able to commit to at least 60 hours of engagement a year
- be willing to participate in a politically impartial way
- be interested in using their insight and experience to help improve policy, practice and the wider system
- be willing to participate alongside other survivors as part of a structured advisory group
- be able to work respectfully with people who may have different views, experiences and priorities
- be able to respect their own boundaries and those of other Panel members, with support where needed
- be willing to follow the Panel's agreed Terms of Reference, confidentiality requirements and agreed ways of working.

You **do not need** to be publicly disclosed

You **do not need** experience of working in government, policy, law, safeguarding or victim support services to be able to apply.

We welcome the full diversity of survivor identities, including those from LGBTQIA+, Disabled, Black and minoritised, and historically under-represented communities.

We wish the Panel to benefit from a broad mix of skills, interests and life experience.

How do I apply?

The application process will focus on what you may bring to the Panel, **not on the details** of the abuse you've experienced. You will **not be asked** to prove or detail what happened to you.

STEP ONE

There will be a word document you need to fill out that asks you some information about yourself, your skills and interest in applying. You can find it on the website **here.**

You can either complete it on the computer and then email it to us at **advisorypanel@victimscommissioner.org.uk**

Or you can print off, complete it by hand and post it to: **Office of the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, 102 Petty France, 6.41, London SW1H 9AJ**

You can have a safe, trusted family member, friend or carer help you fill out the form if you wish. If you have no one you can ask, but feel you need support with completing it you can email us to ask for a member of the team to help you.

Option to give anonymous feedback

STEP TWO

Once your form has been received, we will confirm its receipt and give you an indication of when you can expect to hear from us next. This email will also include a link to an **anonymous and optional feedback form.**

After the closing date, all the applications will be anonymised and then reviewed by our team. We will aim to do this as quickly as possible but this may take longer if we recieve a large number of applications. We will reguarly update you on any changes or delays.

Option to give anonymous feedback

STEP THREE

You will be contacted (via your chosen method of communication) and told whether you have been invited to the next stage. If you have not been shortlisted, we will let you know clearly and compassionately.

If you are invited to the next stage, the team will be in touch to explain and undertake proportionate due diligence checks. This means we may look at public information about you including your social media. These checks are necessary because Panel members may have access to personal or sensitive information. If you have any questions or are concerned about this stage please speak to the recruitment team.

Option to give anonymous feedback

STEP FOUR

You will then be invited to a 'getting to know you' conversation with the recruitment team. This chat can be in person or online.

There will be specific questions we will ask you, but they will be shared in advance, so you have an opportunity to think about what you'd like to share in response.

These conversations will be as accessible as possible; our focus is on getting to know you as a whole person.

After all of these conversations have taken place we will then contact you directly to let you know the outcome.

If you **are not offered** a Panel position then you will be given an opportunity to debrief and provide feedback about your experience if you wish to.

If you **are offered** a Panel place, we will explain about the next steps and onboarding process.

Making the decision to apply

Taking part in the Panel will involve discussing challenging issues, reviewing policy or practice that relates to child sexual abuse/exploitation, and working with others who bring different experiences and perspectives. While you will not be asked to share specific details of the abuse, some aspects of the work may feel difficult and intense for you.

You are encouraged to consider whether this feels like the right time to take part in this type of advisory work. We want you to feel empowered to make an informed choice about whether the role feels safe, manageable and meaningful for you and whether you feel able to maintain the collective boundaries and engage safely with other members.

Panel members will have choices about whether they are publicly identifiable or remain anonymous to the wider public. We recognise that people may feel comfortable sharing different information in different situations, and members will be supported to make their own informed choices about what they share and with whom.

Although there are options for visibility to the wider public, please be aware that your identity will be known to the other Panel members and the dedicated staff facilitating the Panel. As part of the Panel's work, members will engage with government officials and others in a range of setting. You can choose how you wish to be identified in these settings, including by using a pseudonym.

If you would like to have an informal chat to explore the role further before making a decision please email the team on **advisorypanel@victimscommissioner.org.uk**

If, under any circumstances, an individual is found to have joined the Panel under false pretences, we will consider all appropriate options and take decisive action to prioritise the safety and integrity of the Panel and its members.

Frequently asked questions

WILL I BE PAID?

Yes, all reasonable travel and accommodation costs for meetings and events will be reimbursed. You will also be offered payment for attendance at required meetings and engagement in specific projects.

I'VE NEVER REPORTED TO THE POLICE, CAN I STILL APPLY?

Yes you can. You do not need to have reported to the police or experienced the criminal justice system to be able to apply

I'M ALREADY PART OF A LIVED EXPERIENCE GROUP, CAN I STILL APPLY?

Yes you can. You will be asked about this on the application form. If the recruitment team identifies a potential conflict of interest, they will discuss this with you so that it can be explored further.

I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO ME, CAN I APPLY?

Yes you can. Disclosing is a personal choice and we know that survivors may choose to do this at different points of their life. There is no assessment decision made by the team regarding whether you have disclosed before.

I AM INVOLVED IN A LIVE CIVIL/CRIMINAL CASE, CAN I APPLY?

We advise that you only apply if you are not currently involved in a live case/investigation. However we recognise that these investigations can sometimes span decades and leave survivors feeling unable to pursue their interests. If you are unsure of whether to apply or not please reach out to the team on **advisorypanel@victimscommissioner.org.uk** for a confidential discussion.

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE AGED 18 OR OVER TO APPLY?

The Panel is specifically designed for adult victims and survivors. The voices of children and young people are also extremely important, but any engagement with them needs to be safe, appropriate and carefully considered. As the Panel's work develops, consideration will be given to how the voices of children and young people can be heard in safe and meaningful ways.

I HAVE A CRIMINAL RECORD, CAN I APPLY?

Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent you from applying. Applicants will be asked to complete a basic DBS check and disclose any relevant information required as part of the recruitment process. Any information identified will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of its relevance to safety and integrity of the Panel. Please note that a serious violent offence is likely to preclude you.

Frequently asked questions contd

WILL I HAVE TALK TO JOURNALISTS OR THE PRESS?

No. You will not be expected to speak to journalists or the press as part of your role on the Panel. Any media or press requests relating to the Panel will be managed by the Participation Manager, who will discuss these with you were relevant.

IS THIS PANEL PART OF THE GROOMING GANG INQUIRY?

No, the Inquiry is a completely seperate entity.

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO LIVE IN ENGLAND AND WALES? WHY AREN'T NORTHERN IRELAND AND SCOTLAND INCLUDED?

The Panel is open to adult (aged 18 and over) victims and survivors who currently live in England or Wales. Its work will focus on relevant UK Government policy and practice and will not cover areas of policy that are devolved. Survivors who live in Scotland or Northern Ireland are not eligible to apply to this Panel because many of the policy areas relating to child sexual abuse and exploitation are devolved in those nations. However, the Panel will seek opportunities to share learning with relevant survivor groups and organisations across the UK, so that its work does not happen in isolation.

WHY DO PANEL MEMBERS HAVE TO UNDERGO A DBS CHECK?

Panel members will be working closely with other survivors in a space where sensitive information and personal experiences may be shared. A basic DBS check is one of the checks carried out as part of the recruitment process to help support a safe and trusted environment for everyone taking part.

I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW YOU PROTECT MY DATA

For more information on how we use and store your data please look at our privacy notice **here.**

WILL I RECIEVE TRAINING?

As part of the onboarding process, you will receive training and support to help you prepare for your role on the Panel. Further training and learning opportunities will also be offered during your time as a Panel member.

I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS, WHO CAN I TALK TO?

Please email **advisorypanel@victimscommissioner.org.uk** and someone from the team will be able to respond to your questions.

Glossary

Child sexual abuse	**Sexual abuse of children involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.**
Child sexual exploitation	**Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group forces, manipulates, or deceives a child or young person into any sexual activity for their own benefit. It can include the young person being forced or coerced to engage in direct sexual contact or to send indecent photographs or videos.**
Clinical Supervision	**A form of reflective practice where an experienced and qualified practitioner provides a safe space for you to discuss and reflect on the impact of the work you're doing.**
Trauma	**Trauma is when we experience very stressful, frightening or distressing events that are difficult to cope with or out of our control. It could be one incident, or an ongoing event that happens over a long period of time. Trauma can happen at any age. And it can affect us at any time, including a long time after the event has happened.**
Trauma Informed	**Trauma-informed refers to an approach that recognises the widespread impact of trauma, understands its potential effects, and intentionally creates safe, trustworthy, empowering environments to avoid re-traumatisation. It shifts the focus from "What's wrong with you?" to "What happened to you?"**

Support lines

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger or needs emergency help, please call 999.

Everyone's needs are different, you may find it helpful to access some support before or after applying, or you may simply want to take some time to reflect on what you might need going forward. Below are some examples of specialist helplines available for you.

(Please be aware that this list is not exhaustive and each helpline has it's own opening times)

Galop 0800 999 5428

Support for LGBT+ people who experience sexual assault, harassment, image-based sexual abuse, or other forms of sexual situations that happen without consent.

Hourglass 0808 808 8141

Confidential services provide information and support to older people, or anyone concerned about an older person who is at risk of, experiencing, or recovering from any form of abuse or neglect.

Karma Nirvana 0800 5999 247

Helpline supporting victims of forced marriage and honour-based abuse.

Mankind 0808 800 1170

Helpline and support for men over 18 who've experienced sexual abuse at any time in their lives.

Modern Slavery and exploitation helpline 0800 121 700

Information, advice and guidance about any modern slavery issue.

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children 0808 800 5000

A helpline for anyone with concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing

Rape Crisis England & Wales 0808 500 2222

24 hour support line for those over 16 who have experienced sexual abuse and violence at anytime in their life.

Support lines contd

Revenge Porn Helpline 0345 6000 459

For all adult victims of intimate image abuse living in the UK.

Safeline 0808 800 5005

A dedicated service for men and boys in England and Wales affected by sexual violence and abuse and those who support them.

SARSAS 0808 801 0456

Free, anonymous, and confidential support for people aged 13+ of all genders who have been affected by rape or sexual abuse.

StopitNow 0808 1000 900

Anonymous, confidential helpline for anyone concerned about sexual abuse and it's prevention

SurvivorsUK 0808 801 0332

National Male and Non-Binary Survivors Helpline for men, boys, Trans and non-binary people who have experienced sexual abuse at any time in their lives.

The National Association for People Abused in Childhood 0808 801 0331

A UK-wide support line for adults who have suffered any type of abuse in childhood including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

The Survivors Trust 08088 010 818

a free and confidential helpline to any survivor anywhere in the UK and Ireland that feels like they need to talk.

Victim Support 0808 1689111

24/7 supportline

You can contact **advisorypanel@victimscommissioner.org.uk** if you have any questions about this pack, the Panel or the expression of interest process

Further information about the Panel and a copy of the application form can be found here